THE Pastors Farevvell, AND VVish of VVelfare TO HIS PEOPLE. OR A Valedictory Sermon.

By *GEORGE SWINNOCK*, M.A. Preacher of the Gospel late at *Great-Kimbel* in the County of *Bucks*.

Oportet ut prædicatores sint fortes in præceptis, compatientes infirmis, in exhortationibus blandi. *Greg. in Job Mor.* 30.

Finally, Brethren, farewel: Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one minde, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you. 2 Cor. 13. 11.

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THE

Pulpit, Farewell

AND

Wish of Wellington

TO HIS

PEOPLE

ON A

Valedictory occasion

TO

His Honoured and Courteous Friend,
Miſtris Mary Beresford, *Wife*
of the Worſhipful Iohn Beresford,
Eſq;

THere are two things which I have always judged chiefly requiſite in a Paſtor, as he ſtandeth related to his people. *viz.* *Labour* and *Love*. The former is a work of the *Head*, the latter of the *Heart*: faithful *labour* will ſpeak his *love*, and ſincere *love* will ſweeten his *labour*. *Labour* without *love* is unacceptable to God, as a ſweet perfume without fire, it cannot ſend forth its pleaſant,

fragrant savour: *Love* without *labour* is unprofitable to men, like *Rachel*, its *beautiful* but *barren*: both together (as *soul* and *body* are the essential parts of a man) are the *whole* of a *Minister*. Whether to my power I discharged my trust or no, in these particulars, whilest the Divine providence continued me in your Parish, I must leave to his judgement, *whose eyes behold, and whose eye-lids try the Children of men*, nay whether I did not many times to *labour* as to prejudice my own body, that I might serve and profit others souls: but sure I am, when I left you, I could not better manifest my *love* to you, then by commending you to him, who *will never leave nor forsake his people*.

Its the saying of *Euripides*, *That a faithful friend in adversity, is better then a calm Sea to a weather beaten Mariner.* Indeed the world is full of *false* lovers, who use their *friends* as we do *candles*, burn them to the *snuff*, and when all their substance is wasted, trample them under their *feet*, and light others; but *God* to his chosen, is as the *Ivy* clasping about a wall, which will as soon *dye* as *desert* it, *Extreamity* doth but fasten a trusty friend whilst he, as a *well wrought Vault* is the stronger, by how much more weight he beareth Though many men

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are as *ponds*, dry in the heat of Summer, when there is most need of them: yet the blessed God dealeth not so with his Saints, but his help is nearest, when their hardships are greatest; *When they walk in the valley of the shadow of death, he is with them.*

How great a happiness it is to be under the favour and influence of this God, can never be fully known on this side Heaven. The Prince of *Orange* had a *mirror* (say some) which *perfectly* represented the beauty of the *natural Sun*: But this *Sun of Righteousness* is ever in a great degree *Eclipsed*, to us who dwell in this lower World. Here *we know but in part*. *Pompey*, who presumed to enter the *holiest of all*, when he came out was asked what he saw, he answered, *that the house was full of a cloud*: Indeed, *He maketh darkness his secret place*, and yet is pleased to let so much of his glory and goodness be seen in the glass of his word, as may cause us to admire and affect him, and also assure us that he is the chiefest good.

Somwhat of that felicity which floweth from his favour you will find in some measure discovered in the ensuing discourse which I present to you as a small acknowledgement of my great ingagements to you. *Lycurgus* the *Lacedemonian* Law-

Law-giver, made no Law against *ingratitude*, as thinking it impossible for any man to degenerate so much as to be *unthankful*, I esteem it my duty to retain the former favours in memory, which I and mine have received from your self, and my Honoured friend your Husband, and I know not better how to testifie my gratitude, then by endeavouring to my power, your everlasting welfare, and that you may *come to your graves in a full age; as a shock of corn in its season.*

Its a mercy to be full of *days*, a far greater mercy to be full of *grace*, but to be full of *days* and full of *grace*, is one of the most blessed beautiful sights in this World, I hope you are passed from death to life, because you love the brethren; but your *Age* calleth upon you to ensure your effectual calling: The truth is *death* borders upon our *births*, and our *Coffins*, hang over our *Cradles*, but though according to the saying of *Epaminondas*, we may salute *young* persons with *Good-morrow*, or welcome into the World, yet we must salute *old* persons with *Good-night*, for they are leaving the world, The nearer it is to night, the harder we should work, when we know if our work be not done in this day of life, we are undone for ever.

Natural

Natural motions are swiftest at last. The stream of grace must run with greatest speed when its emptying it self into the Ocean of glory. The good Lord enable you to be more and more upright, and abundant in well doing, and so bless your whole Family with his fear and favour that when Death shall break it up ye may be preferred from his lower house of prayer, to his upper house of praise, where is fulness of joy, and where are pleasures for evermore, Which is the desire of

Your Servant in the blessed Saviour,

George Swinnock.

There

There is extant of this Reverend Authors these six other Treatises, all sold by Thomas Parkhurst *at the lower end of* Cheapside.

The Christian-mans Calling; or, a Treatise of making Religion ones Business, wherein the Nature and Necessity of it is discovered; as also the Christian directed how he may perform it in Religious Duties, Natural Actions, his particular Vocation, his Family Directions, and his own Recreation; to be read in Families for their Instruction and Edification. The first Part.

The Door of Salvation opened by the Key of Regeneration; or a Treatise containing the Nature, Necessity, Marks and means of Regeneration, as also the duty of the Regenerate.

Heaven and Hell Epitomized, or the true Christian characterized.

The beauty of Magistracy, in an Exposition of the 82 Psalm, where is set forth the necessity, Utility, Dignity, Duty and Morality of Magistrates.

The fading of the flesh, and the flourishing of faith; or one cast for eternity, with the only way to throw it well.

There is in the press the Second Part of that practical Piece of Divinity entituled, *The Christian-mans Calling*, Containing Directions for our dealings with all men, carriage in all conditions, whether in prosperity or adversity, in all companies good or bad, in solitariness, on the week day from morning to night, in visiting the sick upon a dying bed.

ACTS. 20. 32.

And now Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them that are ſanctified.

HUmane Hiſtories have been valued at ſuch an high price that they have been dedicated to the moſt honourable perſons, as worthy of their ſerious peruſual. *Plinies* natural Hiſtory to *Veſpatian*. Our Engliſh Hiſtory to King *James*; the ſmall Treatiſe which *Paulus Jovius* wrote, *De Rebus Turcicis*, unto the great and mighty Emperour *Charls* the fifth; ſcarce any National piece but its preſented into the hands of the Prince. Surely Divine Hiſtories then (ſuch as this Treatiſe, *The Acts of the Apoſtles* which contain the Heroick acts of the Lords worthies in their combats with, and conqueſts over, not onely men and the world, but ſin and Satan) deſerve the eye and ear and hearts of a Noble *Theophilus* of great and ſmall, of all men whatſoever.

The former part of the new Teſtament contains the great *miſtery* of Chriſt, the *Head* of his Church. This book of the *Acts* contains

the glorious *History* the Church, the *body* of Christ.

In the beginning of the book some particulars are mentioned of all the Apostles to Chap. 13. but it treats most largely of *Pauls* trials and travails in regard that as his *conversion* was most *miraculous*, so his *conversation* was most *illustrious*.

In this twentieth Chapter we have this famous Apostle in his fourth peregrination arriving at *Miletus* (a City upon the borders of *Ionia* and *Cæsaria*, close by the shore of the *Egean* Sea) and sending thence for, and speaking to the *Ephesian* Elders.

In his speech we may observe these four parts.

First, His *Vindication* of himself, Ministers are bound not onely to look to their Consciences, but also to their Credits. *Naturalists* tell us, if the *Load-stone* be rub'd with *Garlick*, it loseth its vertue; When the name of a Minister is contemptible, his Doctrine will be the less acceptable. The Apostle vindicateth himself. 1. As to the *Integrity of his life*, *ye know from the first day that I came into* Asia, *after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility and with many tears.* verse 18. and 19. 'Tis excellent when the Pastor can appeal to the consciences of his people for the purity of his conversation. Holy Ministers are called Angels, *Rev.* 2. but unholy ones are degenerated into Devils, *have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a Devil.* 2. As to his *fidelity in his Doctrine*, *And how I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you,*

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and have taught you publiquely and from house to house. verſ. 20. The Steward is faithful who diſtributeth to every perſon under his charge, their proper and peculiar portion. The ſymbole of *Wolfius* will become every Preacher. *Pietate & labore. By a ſacred life, and ſedulous labour*, he will beſt declare his love to his people. Miniſters muſt be ſtars by the influence of their *lips* feeding, by the regular motion of their *lives* confirming, and by the *light* of both directing many. *Paul magnified* his Office, why ſhould others *debaſe* it? *Melch. Ad.*

Secondly, His *Exortation* to them, As he taught them before by his *pattern*, ſo now by his *Precepts, take heed to the flocks over which the holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers*, verſ. 28. *Take heed*, that is, let all your care and ſtudy be for your own and peoples welfare and proſperity, like good Shepheards, work and watch night and day for the good of your ſheep. This counſel the Apoſtle urgeth upon a threefold ground. Προσεχετε, *Totis ſitis addicti totis animis ad hereatis.*

1. From the *perſon* who committed to them this charge, *take heed to the flocks over which the holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers.* It concerns you to be true to your truſt, when tis committed to you by the Spirit of God. That unfaithfulneſs which is but felony againſt the charge of a *ſubject*, may be Treaſon when 'tis againſt the Charge of a *Soveraign*. O 'tis ill trifling with the moſt high Gods truſt.

2. From the *price* paid for them. *To feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his blood.* verſe 28. Things of the greateſt *coſt* call for our greateſt *care*; ſouls are infinitely precious,

and therefore deserve our utmost pains; If God thought them worth his blood, we may well esteem them worth our tears and sweat.

3. From the *Peril* their flock was in *verse.* 29, 30, 31. *For I know that after my departing, shall greivous Wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock; also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw Disciples after them, therefore watch,* &c. If *Wolves* will watch to *devour*, shepheards must watch to *defend* the sheep. Those Commanders who are intrusted with a Garrison, when they are sure to have their quarters beaten up, had need to be ever upon their guard.

Thirdly, His *Prediction* of his future sufferings, 1. *Propounded. And now behold I go bound in the spirit to* Jerusalem, *not knowing what shall befal me there, saving that the holy Ghost witnesseth that in every City, bonds and afflictions abide me*, verse. 22, 23. *Christians* of all men must bear their *Crosses*, *Ministers* of all Christians must look to undergo *miseries*. And the more *good* a Minister hath, the more *evil* he must expect. The *fuller* the Tree is laden, the more *cudgels* will be thrown at it; the most *fruitful* meadows hear oftenest in the year of the *Sythe*; Pious and laborious *Paul* was the chief Butt against which men and Devils shot. 2. *Amplified*, From the liberty it thereby denyed them of ever seeing *Paul* again, *And now behold, I know that ye all amongst whom I have gone Preaching the Kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.* verse 25. Sad news to honest hearts upon a double ground, partly their lack of him; he had told them of *Wolves*

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entering in among them; now at such a time for the flock to be without a *guide*, when the *storm* arose for the Vessell to be without a *Pilot*; when the Souldiers were to engage in hot service with enemies, for their expert Commander to be *wanting* must needs be woful; That the Nurse should be taken away before the children could go alone, did much affect and afflict their spirits. Partly their *love* to him; As *Paul* was a Religious person, and as he was (probably) their spiritual parent who had begotten them, brought them up in the nurture of the Lord, and upon all occasions advised and assisted them, they could not but love him in an high degree, and therefore much lament his *loss*.

Fourthly, His *Valediction* to those *Ephesian* Elders in the words of the Text, *And now Brethren I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongst all them which are sanctified*, verse. 32. before he had given them a *command* from God, and now he *commends* them to God. The words contain the legacy which *Paul* bequeaths to his Christian friends. He taketh his farewel of them, and wisheth a welfare to them.

And now,] *since I see that I who am your guide must shortly be gone, and since I foresee that Wolves will arise, so ravenous as to conspire and endeavour your ruine, what remains, but that I should commend you to God, who can prevent the effects of their cruelty, and supply the want of my company. And now,* The season is observable; 'tis the *last* and the *greatest* kindness I can do to commend you to God. The occasion

The opening of the words Καὶ νῦν.

occasion is considerable. *And now*, the dying Father commits his children to a faithful Guardian; *And now I must leave you, never to see your faces more; but now I shall leave you to one who will never leave you nor forsake you. And now*

ἀδελφοὶ. *Brethren*] This title is an affectionate term, and speaks how dear and near they were to the Apostle. It discovereth much of his *humility*, though they were his inferiors, yet he calleth them his equals. *Brethren* stand on the same level; but more of his *love*: this even relation is accompanied with great affection, *Love as brethren*, 1 *Pet.* 3.8. Love, like water, doth not easily ascend, but will run swiftly and pleasantly on even ground. *And now my dearly beloved, whom I both love and esteem as Brethren, who are both near and dear to me, since providence is parting us, I cannot better evidence my affection to you, or care of you then by committing you to him, from whom none can part you. And now Brethren*

Παρατίθεμαι ὑμᾶς τῷ Θεῷ παρατίθεμαι, significat patrocinio, curâ, ac tutelæ alterius aliquid commendare. Beza. Commendare veluti commendatur depositum servandum.

I commend you to God.] To *commend* one to another in our English phrase, is either to *praise* him for some worth in him, or to present some *respects* from him; but in Scripture sence, besides the former acceptations, it sometimes signifieth to refer one to the care of another, *Rom.* 16.1. *I commend to you Phebe our sister.* To *commend* in this place signifieth to commit them as dear pledges, or as precious jewels to the tender custody and keeping of the blessed God. As if he had said, *Be not discouraged nor disconsolate at my departure, as if thereby ye should be left disolate, for I commit and commend you to one who will abundantly make up my absence by his Almighty Power and favourable presence; though*

though I am taken from you, and constrained to forsake you, yet I commend you to that God who will be careful of you, and never fail you; who hath infinite strength for your protection, and infinite Wisdom for your direction, and infinite Favour for your consolation. And now brethren I commend you to God

And to the word of his grace.] The Scripture is called Gods Word, because as men by their words discover their wills, so God by the Scripture doth manifest his mind and pleasure. But its that part of Scripture which we call the *Gospel*, which is emphatically termed here, and in some other places *The Word of his Grace*, because it speaketh Gods good will, and good pleasure to the children of men, *Act.* 20. 24. *Tit.* 2. 11. The *Covenant of Works* which God made with *Adam*, and in him with all mankind was in some respects a *Covenant of Grace*, for God was not bound to promise man eternal felicity upon his perfect obedience, but might have required it by vertue of his Soveraignty and dominion. But since mans Apostacy, and impossibility thereby of attaining happiness by his own works, God hath been pleased to accept of the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ, on the behalf of the believing, penitent Christian; which act of infinite Grace being revealed in the Gospel, it is most fitly called *The Word of his Grace.* The Law (as the case stands with man now) speaks nothing but *fury* and *death*, but the Gospel speaks favour and *life*; the Law wounds man with his blows, the Gospel heals him with its balsom; the Law condemneth man without pity to the sufferings of Hell, but the Gospel allowes him a Psalm of mercy, and so saveth him from

ᾧ τῷ λογῳ τῆς χάριτος αὐτοῦ.

from the wrath to come. Now the affectionate Apoſtle commendeth his fainting patients to this rich Cordial *the word of his grace.* They might think it was ſmall comfort and a poor courteſie to be commended to a righteous and jealous God, as ſtubble to be committed to a conſuming fire, therefore he tells them. *I commend you to God, not under the notion of an angry Judge. But in the relation of a gracious father, and compaſſionate friend, which if ye doubt of, do but look into the Goſpel, which is Heavens Court rouls tranſcribed, wherein ye may ſee the naked bowels of his good will, and read his curious eternal contrivance of magnifying his grace in you, and towards you; I commend you to that word of his grace wherein every line ſpeaks love, and each expreſſion his tender affection to you. I know your poverty, but that word of his grace is a mine of unſearchable riches; ye are hungry, but that is bread; when ye are weary there ye may find reſt, whatſoever your conditions be, there is ſutable Conſolation. And to the word of his grace,*

τῷ δυναμένῳ ἐποικοδομῆσαι.

Which is able to build you up,] Theſe words with them that follow, are by *Eraſmus*, according to our Tranſlation refered to the *word of his grace*, but according to *Beza* and ſome others, God is the *antecedent* to this *relative*, *who is able to build you up, &c.* The reaſon of the doubt is, becauſe both are of the ſame gender, whereby its uncertain to which of the two this latter part hath relation. But there is a certain truth if we refer them to either. God is *able to build them up, &c.* and alſo the Goſpel or *word of his grace*, *is able to build them up,*

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&c. God as the first cause, and principal efficient; the word of his grace as the second cause, and subordinate instrument. The Gospel cannot do it without God, and God will not do it without the Gospel; God (ordinarily) by the Gospel doth both sanctifie and save, *build up, and give an inheritance.*

Which is able to build you up,] The Foundation of godliness was already laid in their hearts, but something was still wanting, a greater degree of grace and holiness; *Paul* knew that his brethren would not be contented barely to know Christ, but were desirous to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, and did therefore the more lament his loss, because he as a faithful Steward had furthered the welfare of their souls, by giving them their food in due season: Now to allay their fears of famishing for want of his care, he commends them both to the same Master, and to the same meat, by which they had hitherto thriven and prospered, and which were able still to continue the same vertue, and communicate the same strength, *which is able to build you up.* καὶ δῶναι ὑμῖν κληρονομίαν

And to give you an inheritance] Two things the Children of God do exceedingly desire; Proficiency in grace, and perfection thereof in glory. The Apostle in his valedictory speech, commends them to that God, and to the word of his grace, which can answer both their requests, progress in holiness, and the possession of happiness; *which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance.* Saints are heirs *joynt-heirs with Christ* (Rom. 8. 17.) heaven is their proper and peculiar inheritance, *the inheritance of the Saints in light*, Col. 2. The Gospel or *word of his*

grace purifieth and prepareth them for it, and alſo is the deeds or conveyance ſpeaking their right and title to it, therefore is called the Goſpel of our ſalvation; God is the Author and Donor of it. Glory is his free gift, *Its your fathers pleaſure to give you a Kingdom*, Luk. 12. 32.

ἐν τοῖς ἡγιασμένοις πᾶσιν.

Among all them that are ſanctified] The Inhabitants of Heaven are all holy. Thoſe that ſhall be glorified, muſt firſt be ſanctified; the inner Court was a type of Heaven, into which none might enter but the Prieſts, which were holy to the Lord; Saints are all *Prieſts*, an holy *Prieſt-hood*, Rev. 1. 5.

The ſum of the whole verſe is thus much, *And now Brethren, &c. And now my dearly beloved Brethren, ſince infinitely wiſe providence ſeeth fit to deprive you of my preſence, and I know the groans of your ſpirits to be after a farther degree of ſanctification here, and its conſummation hereafter, I commit and commend you to God, through whoſe ſtrength the word of his grace, is able to give you both growth in grace while ye live, and the Crown of glory when ye dye, amongſt all them that are prepared for it by being partakers of the ſame hope and holineſs. And now Brethren I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance amongſt all them that are ſanctified.*

In the words we may obſerve theſe three parts.

Firſt, The *Compellation*, *Brethren*, The Company of Saints are a ſociety of *Brethren*, *Love the Brother-hood.* The company of ſinners are a rabble of *Conſpiratours.*

Secondly,

Secondly, The *Commendation* of these Brethren, *And now brethren I commend you.* This Commendation of them is amplified.

1. By the *Object*, 1. *To God*, as the *fountain* of their grace and bliss. 2. To the *Gospel* or word of his grace, as the *Channel* in which it was conveyed to them.

2. By the *effects*, which are two, 1. *Proficiency, which is able to build you up*, having laid the foundation, its able to increase the building of grace. 2. *Perfection*, its able to lay the top-stone, and overlay it with glory. *And to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified.*

3ly. The *Occasion* or special season of this commendation, *And now Brethren*. No doubt *Paul* had many a time before commended them to God, *Without ceasing he made mention always in his prayers*; But *now* upon his leaving them he doth in a special manner commend them to Gods care and keeping, *And now Brethren*,

I shall draw some Observations from the words, and then lay down the Doctrine, which I intend to prosecute.

That *Sanctity is no enemy to civility*; the Apostle being to leave them, doth not abruptly turn his back upon them, but solemnly takes his leave of them. *And now Brethren*, some think they cannot be *Christians* unless they be *clowns*, that *good works*, and *good manners* are inconsistent; but though Christianity pare of the *luxuriant* branches of courtesie, yet it doth not *root* it up; like those spices which we apply to windy fruits, it takes away the flatulency and offensiveness which may be in it, but doth not 1 Obser.

cast it away. Civil language and a courteous carriage are (though no part of, yet) an ornament to Christianity. The Saints of God are ever *civil*, and whereas sinners are *complemental*, they are *cordial* in all their salutes. The holy Apostle spendeth the greatest part of a Chapter in courteous salutations, which he would not have done had it be en either unlawful or unnecessary.

Observ: 2 *That Grace will turn civil courtesie into serious Christianity.* The Apostle doth not take a bare civil farewel of them, according to the custom of most men, but solemnly take his leave of them by commending them to the blessed God, *And now brethen I comend you to God.* A gracious man prefers his low and civil actions into the high form of religion; wicked men *debase* actions that are sacred, and godly men advance actions that are civil. As the *Iron Mine* gives a tincture and relish of its own nature to all the waters which run through it, making them thereby more salubrious to our bodies; so grace gives a savour and taste of its own nature and property to all the actions, about which the subject in which it is, is conversant, and thereby makes them more healthful to our souls. It *sanctifieth* our very *salutes*; *salute one another with an holy kiss*, *Rom.* 16. 16. kissing seems to be wholly civil, but among the godly its sacred, *an holy kiss*.

The use of kissing was frequent amongst the Saints in their holy meetings *Tert. ut. de Orat.*

Observ: 3 *That all Christians are brethren: And now brethren.* Saints are all linked together in the bond of *Brotherhood.* The Jews called all Brethen of the same Country; and it was the custom of the primitive Christians to call all *Brethen* and *Sisters* of the same *communion*; they are *brethren* if we consider their relations;

Tertul. Apol. cap. 39.

relations; they have all the same *Father*, God, *I will be to you a Father, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord Almighty*, 2 *Cor.* 6.18. They are not onely adopted, but also begotten again or regenerated by the same God, *Joh.* 1.12. *James* 1.21. They are all children of the same *Mother*; *Jerusalem which is above is free, the Mother of us all*, *Gal.* 4.26. they suck the same *breasts*, *Isa.* 66.11. 1 *Pet.* 2. 2. wear the same *garments*, and as they grow up feed at the same *Table*, and shall dwell together in the same *house* for ever. They are united under the same *Head*, renewed with the same *hearts*, and travel to the same *Heaven*. They are brethren in regard of *affection*; the curtains of the tabernacle were joyned together with loops, and so are true Christians with love; they love as *brethren*, seeking the good and welfare of each other. A Saints talents are not an *inclosure* for his private profit, but a *common* for the advantage of others. Their desires are not confined within their own dwellings, but they reach thousands in their *prayers*, whom they can never reach on earth in their *persons*. *For my brethren and companions sake, I will now say peace be within thee*, *Psal.* 122.1. they sympathize in each others sufferings, and rejoyce in one anothers solace. Every Saint is a great *Merchant*, who hath his *Factors* in all parts of the world trading for him at the throne of Grace.

That the Gospel is the word of Gods Grace. And to the word of his Grace. The word *Grace* is taken in Scripture Observ: 4

1. For *favour* or *good will*. *Grace be with you*. And so Col. 1.2. *Grace be unto you*.

2. For

2. For the *effects* and *fruits* thereof *Jude v. 4. Turning the grace of God into lasciviousnes.*

The Gospel in both respects is fitly termed the *Word of his Grace.*

1. Because it containeth the *Infinite grace and favour* of the most high God to Sinners. The Law speaks in effect mans *bottomless misery*, but the Gospel speaks Gods *boundless mercy*; the Law is a *Court of Justice*, but the Gospel a *Throne of Grace.* Grace sits as Commander in cheif in the Gospel, and as *Ahashuerus* to *Hester* holdeth out the golden Scepter of Mercy for poor condemned persons to touch with the hand of faith and live. The sum of the Gospel is comptehended in a song of that Angelical Quire, *Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men*: the substance and body of Gods love to man was never dissected and laid open to the view of mortals till the Gospel was preached. Before it ran as a river under ground, but in the Gospel it bursts forth, and sheweth it self to refresh us with its pleasant streams: the Law is as it were a *warrant* under heavens hand and seal for mans execution, but the Gospel, like the *Dove*, comes flying swiftly to prevent it with the *Olive branch* of peace and pardon in its mouth: Chusing-grace, Calling-grace, Justifying-grace, and Glorifying-grace are all discovered in the Gospel, and therefore it may well be called *the word of his grace.*

Ephes. 1. 5. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Rom 3. 24. 1 Pet. 3. 7.

2. Because the Gospel is the *effect* and *fruit* of *Gods grace* or good will to men. Philosophers observe that *dew* never falleth in stormy, tempestuous weather; the dropping of the dew of the *Gospel* on parched, scorched hearts is a sign and fruit of serene calm

calm heavens: that our parts of the world, like *Gideons* fleece (hould be *wet* with this *dew* when other parts are *dry*, this is meerly from *Grace*. *I have cauſed it to rain on one City, and not upon another*, *Amos* 4.7. this rain of the *Goſpel* which cooleth heat, melloweth the hearts, and cleanſeth the unholy *goeth by Coaſts*, *Pſa* 147.19,20.

3. Becauſe the *Goſpel* is the *uſual means of begetting grace*. As Manna fell about the *Iſraelites* tents with the dew, ſo grace is diſtilled and dropt down with the *Goſpel*. Many of the Jews heard the thunders of *Sinai*, the threatnings of the Law and were not moved; but the Baptiſt wins their children with the ſongs of *Sion*, the promiſes of the *Goſpel*. *Received ye the Spirit by the preaching of the law, or the hearing of faith*. The ice which is hardened by the cold, is melted with the Sun. When the murderers of our Saviour heard the *Goſpel*, they were *pricked to the heart* *Acts* 2. 37. The hard flint is broken upon the ſoft pillow.

That the Goſpel is effectual, not onely for converſion but alſo for edification. Which is able to build you up. Obſerv. 5. The *Goſpel* doth not only *bring forth* ſouls to Chriſt, but likewiſe *build up* ſouls in Chriſt: the natural childe is nouriſhed when in the world by the ſame ſeed (by a further concoction turned into milk) by which it was conceived in the womb; the ſpiritual child is begotten by the Goſpel: *I have begotten you through my Goſpel*, and built up by the ſame, 1 *Pet.* 2.2. *As new born babes deſire the ſincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.*

That the word of Gods grace can carry men to glory; And to give you an inheritance. Obſerv. 6. It doth like *Moſes* lead the

the Saints out of *Egypt*, deliver him from bondage to his lusts, conduct him through the Wilderness of the World, and also like *Joshua* bring him into *Canaan*, the land of promise. Its called *the grace of God which bringeth salvation*, Tit. 2. 11. It bringeth salvation to man, and it bringeth man to salvation.

Obser: 7 That *Heaven is an inheritance*; *And to give you an inheritance.* An inheritance is an estate left or given by the Father to his Son and heir; Saints are all Gods Sons, and his Sons are all first born, and so Heirs. Gods natural Son is his natural Heir, but his adopted Sons are his adopted Heirs, and so have an inheritance given them by their Father. Others have inheritances by their births, Saints have theirs by their new births. Their inheritance is incomparable, its the same which the natural Heir hath, *joynt heirs with Christ*, Earthly possessions are to it less then nothing. Their right to it is indefeasible *An inheritance reserved for us in Heaven*, 1 Pet. 1. 3. they can never be deprived of it, either by others cruelty nor their own carelesness, for tis in Gods keeping *reserved for us.*

Obser: 8 That *the inheritance of Heaven is onely for them that are Holy. Among all them that are sanctified.* None but the Children of God, such as are born again, are heirs of this inheritance. All that are *saved* must be *sanctified*. The *inheritance* is *undefiled* and so must all the inhabitants be. If a carnal, unsanctified person ever enter into that Royal Pallace, he must first make the Gospel a Lye, and God a Lyer. *And into it*

Rev. 2. ult. *can in no wise enter any thing that is defiled or unclean.* All that are there, are admitted into Gods immediate service,

ſervice, and will ſo great a King be ſerved in unclean veſſels, dirty feet are not for Royal preſence Chambers.

The Doctrine which I intend to proſecute, and which will include, the ſubſtance of the verſe is this,

The Doctrine, *That the greateſt good a Paſtor can do for his Brethren whom he muſt leave, is to commend them to God: And now Brethren I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace.*

I ſhall ſpeak principally to the fountain of their being and bliſs, their recommendation to God, and in the cloſe of the Sermon briefly touch the *Channel* of the Goſpel, which he hath cut out as the means of conveying his bleſſings to the Children of men. I ſay again —— *That its the duty, and the greateſt good a Miniſter can do for his friends whom he muſt leave, to commend them to God.* The Apoſtle had a great love to, and tender reſpect for the Brethren, but how doth he manifeſt it, by commending them to God.

That its the practice, duty, and greateſt kindneſs of Chriſtians to commit their friends to God, is viſible in the Scriptures, *Paul* and *Barnabas* when they came to *Derbe*, *commended the Brethren to the Lord, on whom they beleived*, Acts 14. 23.

But eſpecially when Parents leave their Children, they commit them to the care of ſome faithful perſon. When Old *Jacob* was to dye, he commends his Children to the *living God*, Gen. 48. 15, 16.

and 40; before Moses left the Israelites in his Swanlike Song, Deut. Chap. 32, and 33. he doth not onely command them Gods precept, but also commend them to Gods protection.

Our blessed Saviour, who is an unparralled pattern and president, being to depart out of the world, and go to the Father, would not leave his Disciples *fatherless*. He knew the hearts of his servants were heavy, that their Master was to *be taken from their head*, alas! what can the Chicken do, when the Hen under whose wings they used to be cluckt, and cherished was kild; therefore he commends them to God as the greatest good which his boundless love could do for them, *And now I am no more in the the World, but these are in the World, and I come to thee, Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the World, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil, &c.* Joh. 17. 11, to 16. How affectionately, how pathetically doth he intreat his Father to take the care and charge of them. *Father keep them, Holy Father keep them*, as if he could never speak it enough. How many Arguments doth he use to perswade and prevail with his Father to be the guide and guardian of his Children. *Father, I must leave them, O do thou love and keep them, that they may not be left alone. Father I beg not their immediate translation to glory, but onely their preservation in an estate of grace; I desire not that they should be kept from the evil of affliction, but only from the evil in affliction, and shall I be denyed. The World hates them for thy sake, and what will become of them if thou wilt not help them.*

In

In the Explication of the Text I ſhall ſhew

1. *What it is* for a Miniſter to commend his friends to God, or how this is done.

2. *Why* its a Miniſters duty, and the greateſt good a Paſtor can do for them from whom he muſt part, is to commend them to God.

Firſt, *How a Miniſter can commend his brethren and friends to God.* This is done two ways, namely; by Prayer and by Faith.

1. *By a cordial ſupplication to God, or by prayer;* the departing *parent* appointeth his *Executor* to be careful of and faithful to his children, and ſo commendeth them to him; but the *departing Paſtor*, intreateth *God* to be gracious to, and mindful of his people. As by preaching the Miniſter commends God to his peoples acceptation, ſo by *prayer* he commends his people to Gods benediction. The principal part of the Prieſts Office under the Law, was to offer ſacrifice, and to pray for the people; *Aaron* muſt bear the names of the children of *Iſrael* before the Lord. And the main work of us Miniſters of the Goſpel is to ſtand betwixt God and our people, by giving *precepts* from God to them, and by putting up *prayers* to God for them. *In this wiſe ſhall ye bleſs the people, ſaying unto them, The Lord bleſs thee, and keep thee, Numb.* 6, 23. We bleſs them when we beg of God to bleſs them. God bleſſeth imperatorie, by *commanding* a bleſſing on men; *There the Lord commanded his bleſſing, even life for evermore, Pſal.* 133. 3. Miniſters bleſs impetratorie, by *commending* them to Gods bleſſing. Gods bleſſing is *operative*, his *benedicere eſt benefacere*; our bleſſing is *optative* onely; we *wiſh* the bleſſing, and that's all, but God can *work* the bleſſing.

The Apoſtle *Paul* uſually made prayer the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the preface and ending of all his Epiſtles. If we obſerve it well we ſhall finde that each of them is ſented with this ſweet perfume, *Rom.* 1. 9. and 15.13. and 16.24. 1 *Cor:* 1.3,4. and 16.23. 2 *Cor:* 1. 2,3. and *ult: ult: Gal:* 1.3. and 6.*ult: Epheſ:* 1. 2,3, 15, 16 20. and 6. 23, 24. *Phil:* 1. 2,3,4,9,10,11. and 4. *ult: Col:* 1.2,3, and 4.*ult:* 1 *Theſſ:* 1. 2. and 3. 10. and 5: *ult:* 2 *Theſſ:* chap: 1, and 2: and 2: 16: and *ult: ult:* 1 *Tim:* 1: 2: and *ult: ult:* 2 *Tim:* 1: 2: and *ult; ult: Tit:* 1.4: and 3: *ult: Philemon verſ:* 4: *Heb:* 13:21,22. Prayer was his *ſalutation*, and prayer was his *concluſion*; nay as ſome perſons of quality *ſeal* all their *letters* with their *coats of Arms*, ſo the holy Apoſtle all his *Epiſtles* with *prayer* for the perſons to whom he wrote, and gives us leave to look on all as *forged* where this *mark* was miſſing; *The ſalutation of Paul, with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epiſtle, ſo I write*; *The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you all, Amen*, 2 *Theſſ:* 3. 17,18. All Chriſtians muſt pray for others; its their *general calling* in part. Among the *Perſians* he that offered ſacrifice prayed for all his Countrymen, ſaith *Herodotus* (*lib:* 1. *pray one for another*, *Jam:* 5. But its the *particular calling* of a Miniſter: We muſt give our ſelves to prayer, it muſt be the element in which we breath and live, *He is a Prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee*, *Gen:* 20. 7. *Prophets* of all men muſt be frequent at *prayer*.

But there are ſome perſons which Miniſters muſt in a ſpecial manner commend to God in their *prayers*; namely, the people which God hath committed to their ſpecial charge, A good *Houſe-keeper* will re-

lieve and help his *neighbours* and *ſtrangers*, but he hath a greater regard, and more tender reſpect for his *children* and thoſe of his *own Family*. Our prayers, like Sir *Francis Drakes* ſhip muſt incompaſs the whole World, even all in the *land of the living* that have not ſinned the *ſin unto death*; *I will that ſupplications and prayers be made for all men*, 1 *Tim.* 2. 1. The higher a man is, the further he ſeeth, and the richer a man is, the more he releiveth; the higher a man is in holineſs, the further he ſeeth into others indigencies, and the richer he is in grace, the more he by prayer begs the releif of their neceſſities. But in the wide earth our eye muſt principally be on *Gods vineyard* to water that with our tears, and to beg the influence of heaven, for the refreſhing and ripening the fruits thereof; *Praying always with all prayers for all Saints*, *Epheſ.* 6. 18. the *tongue* may well pray for the other *members* of the ſame *body*: Chriſt hath taught us this in that *Prayer* of *prayers*, as a *Father* calleth it. *Our Father*; *Father* ſpeaketh our faith in God, *Our*, enjoyneth charity to our Brethren; but in this vineyard our love and labour muſt be ſpecially for that part of it which is committed to our truſt. Of all debts *Specialties* muſt firſt be paid: Prayer is a debt, *God forbid that I ſhould ſin in ceaſing to pray for you*, ſaith *Samuel*, and and in regard of our particular pariſhes, a *Bond*, a *ſpecialty*, *We are bound to thank God always for you*, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 3. The Miniſters *prayers* as well as his parts are the *common ſtock* of the pariſh, in which all have a ſhare. Or as the Buckets which hang up in the Churches at *London*, they are uſeful and helpful to any part of the City as occaſion is, but ſpecially

for

for the benefit of those parishes in which they are. We must as some Shop-keepers, drive a trade a *far off*, beyond the Seas, but be sure not to be idle in our shops at home. We must mind others at the Throne of grace, but be sure to remember our own people. He that starveth his family, is not likely to feast his Neighbours.

Secondly, *By a fiducial expectation of good*, or by *faith*, we commend our business to a friend when we *cast* on him the *care* of it, and *trust* him with it; Ministers commend their friends and affairs to God, by beseeching his favour towards them, and believing that he will be tender of them. We have many cares and fears about our dear friends whom we do love, and whom we must leave, but faith easeth our *hearts* by committing them into safer *hands*; The *burden* of all the Churches lay on *Paul*, and surely twas heavy enough to have broken his back, had he not learned the art of faith, by which he removed it to stronger shoulders. *Cast thy burden on the Lord and he shall sustain thee*, Psa. 55. 22. Here is our *charge*, and our *discharge*. Our Charge is, *to cast our burden on the Lord*; and our Discharge, *He will sustain thee*. The Apostle prayeth God for the grace given to the *Philippians*, and prayeth to God for its increase. *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you always in every prayer of mine, making request with joy*, 1 Phil. 3. 4, 5. But mark how he enliveneth his prayer by the soul of faith, knowing that without it, twould be but a dead Corps. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*, vers. 6.

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Our prayers for our people will be to little purpose, if faith be not joyned with them. There are indeed many blessings in the womb of prayer, but without the Midwifery of faith it will never be delivered. *Whatsoever ye ask in my name, believing, ye shall receive.* *Prayer* is the *Key* that openeth Gods Treasury, but *Faith* is the *hand* which takes out and receives of his infinite bounty; *Prayer* must have a *promise*, or else tis a Vessel without a bottom, and that promise must have faith, or else, the Vessel lyeth still, and cannot stir at all. When a full gale of faith fills the sails, then the Vessel of prayer launcheth fourth most hopefully, and returneth with its riches fraught.

When God had acquainted *Abraham* with his intention to destroy *Sodom*, *Abraham* sensible of his Nephews danger, commends him to God by prayer and by faith, *Gen.* 18. 23. now mark the issue, *God remembred* Abraham, *and brought* Lot *out of* Sodom, Gen. 19. 29. *Abrahams* prayer hit the mark at which it aimed, but tis because the eye of faith leveld the Arrow.

Faith honours God, by committing to him so great a trust as the inestimable souls of his people; and God honours faith, by being true to his trust, and answering fully his chosens, and suppliants faith. *The Children of* Judah *prevailed because they relyed on the Lord God of their Fathers*, faith engaged God in the combate, and therefore they could not but conquer, 2 *Cron.* 13.

He that prayeth for himself and not for others, is fitly compared to an Hedghog who laps himself within his own *soft down*, and turns his brissels to all the

the World beside. And he that prayeth for others without reliance on God through Christ for audience, works at the labour in vain, and like *Penelope* undoeth by night all that he wrought in the day. The truth is, we *lye* to God in prayer, if we do not *rely* on him after prayer.

So then for the Preacher to commend his brethren or friends to God is in brief thus much. *To open their cases and conditions to God in prayer, earnestly begging the relief of their indigencies, and beleiving that through Christ he will supply all their necessities.*

In the next place, I come to the *Reasons* why the Pastor must commend his brethren and friends to God. And they shall be drawn from these three heads; From *God*, from the *World*, and from the *Brethren* themselves; Gods *propriety* in them, the Worlds *enmity* against them, and their own *impotency*, do all require that they should be commended to Gods care and charge.

I shall now shew the necessity of commending them to God, that its the greatest good will appear in the *Use*, because he is the most able, loving and faithful friend.

First, In regard of *God*, his *propriety* in them. None so fit to take care of the Child as its *Father*. A *brute* will venture its self, and encounter with that which is much stronger, in defence of her own; the fearful *Hen* which hath nothing but flight to secure her self from the Dog, will yet hazard a duel against the Kite, to protect her little Chickens. The blessed Jesus gives this ground why he commends his Church to God, *I pray for them, I pray not*

not for the World, but for them which thou hast given me out of the World, for they are thine, Joh. 17.9. *I pray not for strangers, nor enemies to thee, but for thine own people, thine one family, for them thou hast chosen, called & loved. For they are thine; thy* jewels, *thy* portion, *thy* temple, *thy* children. Men in a flame will venture far to secure their own *jewels. Nabath* would hazard & lose his life, rather then part with his own *portion.* What cost will some be at, and what care will they take to keep their own *houses* in good repair? *David* would have died, that his own *Son* might have lived. *Propriety* is a sufficient ground for special protection. God doth by a general providence take care of all his creatures, because of his general propriety in them, because they are his creature. He feeds the young Ravens, and satisfies the hunger of the Sparrows. He is upon this account the *preserver of man and beast*, but his *special providence* is exercised about them in whom he hath a *special propriety.* The Saints are his λαὸς περιούσιος, *peculiar people*, & therefore he hath over them a *peculiar protection.* Hence his peculiar care is compared to a Bird flying over the Nest, where her young ones are, *Isa.* 31.5. He abhors him as an infidel, who doth not provide for his *own*, surely then he will take care of his *own* himself. *Aristotle* saith, *Propriety* is the ground of all the toyl and labor in the World. If all things were *common*, every one would be *careless*, but because it's their *own* ground, therefore they Dung, and Plow, and Sow it; because it is their own wealth, therefore they work hard to increase it. God hath a propriety in his people, they are his by *Election.* The new creature was conceived in Gods eternal purpose before he was *born*; they are *his* by *redemption*,

tion, he paid an infinite price for them; They are his by *regeneration*, begotten by him, and born of him. They are his by promise, *I entred into covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* Now because they are his, therefore they go to him for protection. *I am thine, save me, Psa.* 119.94. and therefore he affords them his special and gracious presence, *Israel is holiness to the Lord, the first fruits of his increase; all that devour him shall offend, evil shall befall them,* Jer. 2.3. None can wrong God in any thing that is his at an easie rate.

Secondly, *The worlds enmity against them.* The sheep need some Dogs to defend them, that have so many Wolves to devour them; They who have many and mighty enemies, surely want some faithful able friend; this was another ground why Christ commended his Disciples to God, *I have given them thy word, and the World hath hated them because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the World,* Joh. 17. 14. *Father keep thy Children, for they are surrounded with a wicked World, whose tender mercies are cruelties. Alas! what shall become of thy lambs, who are ever amongst roaring ravenous lyons if thou shouldst not protect them?*

The old *enmity* between the Serpent and the Woman is not yet, neither ever will be worn out. There are *natural antipathies* between some creatures, for which little reason can be given. As between the *Lyon* and the *Cock*, the *Elephant* and *Boar*, the *Cammel* and *Horse*: The *Serpent* saith *Aristotle* will rather flie into the fire, then come

come near the boughs of a *wild Ash*: but there is a greater antipathy between the *seed of the woman*, and the *seed of the Serpent*. *An unjust man is abomination to the just, and he that is upright in his way, is abomination to the wicked*, Prov. 29: *ult.* The *Eagle* saith the Philosopher hath continually enmity with the *Dragon* and *Serpent*. Saints are *Eagles*, they have enmity with the *Serpentine* brood, but it is *odium offencionis*, they *hate* wicked mens *sins*, but not their *persons*. They loath the *poison*, but not the *cup* in which it is. As tender Physitians they hate the noisom *disease*, but pity the *patient*, thus *the unjust man is abomination to the just*; but the wicked hate the godly, *odio inimicitiæ*, with a *hatred of perfect enmity*, wishing evil to their persons, and working it to the utmost of their power. They that are *born after the flesh persecute them that are born after the spirit*; their rage is so great, that were their power answerable to their malice, they would cut *Israel* off from being a people, *that the name thereof might be had no more in remembrance*.

Indeed every Christian may say as *David*, *They hated me without a cause*; the World hath no just cause to hate and curse the people of God, but there is a reason of all their rage, and wrath, enmity and cruelty against the Saints? and that is, because they are *Saints*; Wherefore did *Cain* imbrue his hands in his own Brothers blood? *Because his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous*, 1 Joh. 3. 12. The *light* is burdensom and greivous to *Owls* and *Bats*, and all night Birds, the light of a Saints holiness is offensive to sinners,

ners, that are used onely to the deeds of darkness; nay, the greater the light, the more painful to their sore eyes. *Swine* cannot endure *sweet odours*; Those that are unclean, and delight to wallow in the mire of vice, hate the fragrant perfumes of grace. The pleasant smell of *Spikenard* is poisonous to them. *Horse-flies* are kild with Oyntments.

Now if Saints fight with enemies that are more politique and powerful then themselves, they must be conducted by one that is strong indeed, or they will be forced to leave the field. Besides it is an engagement to God to help his people, because, for his sake the world hates them. A Prince counts it a dishour to forsake him, who hath ventured his life, and lost his limbs in his cause and quarrel.

Thirdly, *Their own Impotency.* They are not able to take care of themselves, and therefore must be commended to another. In the *Civil Law* there is provision made for out-casts, there are some Hospitals to entertain them. By the *common law*, if parents die there are Officers appointed to take care of poor fatherless Children. With God *the fatherless find mercy*, Hos. 14. 3. Those that are *Orphans*, want a *Guardian.* Children which cannot go alone, need their Mothers helping hand. The strongest Christian is but a child, and except God hold him by his right hand will every day get many falls and knocks. The greatest Saint is but a glass without a bottom, which cannot stand any longer then it is held; Hence they are compared to a new born infant which is both polluted and ready to perish, if none take care of it, *Ezek.* 16. 5.

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If beleivers dangers be *temporal*, their defence must be the Almighty and eternal God, or they are ſold. *We have no ſtrength, but our eyes are unto thee*, ſaith 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. They cannot do the ordinary actions of *nature*, without his aſſiſtance, who is the *God of all grace*, *in him we live, and move, and have our beings*, Act. 17. 14. They live in him, and move by him, as they have their beings from him; If the fountain fail, the ſtreams ſoon are dryed up; If God denieth his influence, man droppeth into earth: *Ineſſe eſt de eſſentia creaturæ*; *Inherence is eſſential to the creature.*

When *ſpiritual* perils overtake them, they cannot hold out without Gods protection. When *Hezekiah* was left but a little in his own hands, how much doth he diſcover the pride of his own heart. Though *Peter* ſeemed ſo reſolute and valiant a Captain (as to go before all the Apoſtles in courage) yet when Chriſt did but for an hour or two withdraw, how ſhamefully doth he flye back like a Coward? the weak breath of a Maid bloweth down the ſtrong Caſtle of his confidence. If God do but depart from *Sampſon*, his ſtrength departs alſo, and the *Philiſtines* may make what paſtime with him they pleaſe. The holieſt man is no match for a Devil. If our God leave us, our defence is departed from us, and the *uncircumciſed one* will make ſport with us indeed.

All our power for *ſacred performances* is wholly from another. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. To think (we

(we suppose) is an easie thing, but unless God help it is too hard for us; God gave *Israel* their *Manna* every day, or they could not have subsisted; God must give us fresh supplies of his spirit in every duty, or they cannot be rightly performed. The greatest fulness of a Christian is not the fulness of a fountain, but of a vessel; which because always is letting out, must be always taking in; The Conduit which is continually runnning, must be always receiving from the River. The Christians disbursements are great and constant, therefore such must his incomes from God be, or he will quickly prove a bankrupt.

Habitual grace it self lieth as water at the bottom of the pump, and cannot by all our labour be raised up, till God pour in his exciting grace. The flame doth not more depend upon the fire, then we upon God. Things that are weak, lean on that which is strong; the Wood-vine, not able to stand of it self clings about the hedge, or tree, and thereby gets to some heigth: the weakest will go to the walls if not protected.

This reason is implied in Christs petition to his Father: *Father keep them*; As if he had said, *They are poor shiftless children, that can neither stand nor go without help, therefore they must not be left alone: Alas they are such pitiful helpless creatures that any one may wrong them of the Legacies which I have purchast for them, and bequeathed to them, they will lose the grace I have given them, and fall into the sins which I have kept them from, whilst I was with them, if they be but one moment out of thine eye and armes, therefore Father keep them*; If they who were to

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be endowed with an extraordinary measure of the spirit were unable to keep themselves, much more unable are we; if Pillars cannot stand of themselves, much less can weak Reeds.

Having spoken somewhat in the *Explication*, I shall proceed to the *Application* of the Point.

First, It informeth us of the *Piety of a true Pastor*, he commends his people to God, this is his character: When others *curse* their people, and commit them to the Devil; he *blesseth* his Parishioners, and commendeth them to God: the mouth of some indeed, like *Rabshekah's* are full of raylings, and their tongues are even black with blasphemies against God and his people, (though their curses are but like *false fire* which may flash a little, but will do no Execution) but the faithful Ministers of the Gospel have learned other language as they are *blessed* men, so they are blessing men: Some Ministers are Ministers of Satan, all their business is to accuse the Brethren, they are the Saints enemies because they *follow the thing that good is*; *Publicans* bless them, that bless them; but though the people of God pity them, and pray for them, and beg the blessing of God on them, yet they (far worse then *Publicans*) return cursing for blessing, but true shepheards seek and study the welfare of their sheep. The false Mother did not care though the Child were divided and slain but the true Mother cried out, *Divide not the Child, in no wise slay it, for her bowels yearned towards her Child*, 1 Kings 3. 26. Ministers are called *Fathers*, and their people their *Children*: Wicked

Wicked Ministers are *false Fathers*, and cares not what becomes of their children; the great *murderer of souls* may slay them at his pleasure, and they will not open their mouths against him; nay too too often they help him drive the poor silly sheep out of their pastors to the slaughter-house. But godly Ministers, like *true Fathers*, endeavour by all means the welfare of their children; they cry out with *Hagar*, *How can I see the death of my child! How can I see the eternal death of my poor, ignorant, carnal neighbors?* they open their mouths and their hearts too (for their bowels yearn towards their children) for their people to God, as the Ruler to Christ; *Sir, Come down quickly ere my childe dye. Lord, such unregenerate, scandalous children whom thou didst commit to my charge are at the very point of death. I have acquainted them from thee of the evil and end of their wicked ways, but cannot obtain so much as a sober hearing; but Lord if thou wouldst speak to them they would hear thee; thou canst open their eyes, break their stony hearts and make them stoop; Lord come down quickly ere my children dye, nay dye eternally.*

Secondly, It discovereth the *great priviledge of a gracious people*; When they are deserted by man, they are commended to God. Those that part them and their *Pastor*, cannot part them and their *God*. *And now brethren I commend you to God*; though Christians may be left by weak, earthly friends, yet they shall never be forsaken by their Almighty heavenly Father. Christ prayeth for them in heaven, Christians pray for them on earth, how rich must they needs be who have a stock in such faithful hands employed for their use in both worlds. It was the

misery

misery of *Julian* that the Church shut him out of her prayers, and that was a forerunner of his sad future doom. Its the felicity of true Christians, that they are in all the Saints prayers.

All the felicity of man is bound up in the *favour* of God, and therefore to be commended to his *care* must needs be a great comfort. I must tell you no people can enjoy a greater priviledge. *Israel* was famous for this above all the Nations on the face of the earth; *For what nation is there so great?* saith *Moses Deut.* 4. 7. They that consider *Israels* outward condition may somewhat wonder how *Israel* should be glorious beyond all comparison. *Israel* was now wandering in a desolate, howling Wilderness, having no food for their bellies but what a miracle must send them in; and no *raiment* for their *bodies*, but that on their *backs*; Heaven must rain down bread, or they must perish with hunger; a rock must be broacht to give them water, or they die for thirst; their *cloaths* must grow with their *bodies*, and not wear out neither, or they must go *naked*; they had not an house to hide their heads in, but some slender tents; turn which way they will they fall into the *paws of ravenous beasts*, or into the hands of men no less cruel; yet in this barren Desart, and in the midst of these destractions, no nation in the World, were their tables never so richly spread, and their Wardrobes never so largely filled, can compare with *Israel* for honour and happiness. But what is the reason? truly none but this, *God was their Patron and Guardian. For what nation is their so great which hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things we call upon him for?* Other Nations

might excell them in number, in treasure, in creatures; other Nations might have honours and pleasures nearer them; but every Nation was inferior to them, because no Nation had *God so near them*. Tis the near approach of this Sun that causeth a Spring and Summer of light and gladness, of warmth and delights. That Nation from which he departeth, *whatsoever they enjoy*, have but long dismal nights, and sharp bitter frosts.

When men are said in Scripture to be obnoxious to all evil, they are onely said to be *forsaken by the chiefest good*. *I have forsaken my house, I have left my heritage*, Jer. 12.7. But what is the fruit of Gods forsaking his house? Cannot the building stand, though the Workman be gone? No, tis tumbling down apace, *I have given the dearly beloved of my soul into the hands of her enemies. Many Pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have made my pleasant portion, a desolate Wilderness*, v. 10. When this *fence* is removed, the vineyard is quicky destroyed. When *David* would pray his worst against the Churches enemies, what doth he beg? *Let them be confounded*, Psal. 12. 5. or disappointed in all their designs; this is *much*, to *conceive with sorrow*, and to have *hard labour*, and then to *bring forth nothing*. *Let them be as the grass upon the house top, which withereth before it be grown up*, vers. 6. Let them perish speedily, suddenly, and irrecoverably; this is more. The former was *bad*, that they should take much pains to no purpose; but this is *worse*, that their pieces that they discharge against others, should not onely miss their mark, but recoil upon themselves. But all this, and much more, vers. *ult.* (which the Psalmist addeth as

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an amplification of the latter.) *Neither let them that go by, say, The blessing of the Lord be upon you*; this is *worst* of all. *David* knew that if they were out of Gods *care*, they should be under his *curse*, and then they should be miserable indeed. As an eclipse of the Sun darkens the Creation, though the other lights of Heaven shine never so brightly; so whatsoever comforts any man enjoyeth if God be *wanting*, he is miserably *woful*. Its *Seneca's* observation of *Alexander*, *He overcame the Persians, but he slew Calisthenes; he conquered to the Ocean, but he slew Calisthenes, &c.* That the slaughter of his friend drew a black line over all his honourable enterprizes, and as too much shadow to a picture, sullied the glory of them. It may be said of some men, they have large estates, but *no God*; they have high preferments, but *no God*; they have excellent parts, and natural accomplishments, but *no God*: This want of a God gives a dash to all the other, and like *Copris* turns all their wine (be it never so rich) into ink and blackness.

On the other side, the fruition of God is the greatest favour. As some write of the *Christal* that what stone soever it toucheth, it puts a lustre and loveliness on it; So whomsoever God approacheth to, he puts beauty and glory on the soul.

Because the witness of an Adversary is a *double testimony*. Let *Balaam* (who, as some write of a *toad*, had a pearl in his head, though his body was poysonous) give in his *evidence*. *How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles O Israel, Numb.* 24. 5. He speaks both by way of *interrogation* and *admiration*; their *tents* were so comely, and their *tabernacles* so lovely, that their very enemy was affected

and ravished with them. But whence came *Israel* to be such a well marshalled army, that he who came to fight against them, thinks them beyond all compare, nay doth himself admire their postures and order, their glory and gallantry. Why, from the presence of their Lord General. *The Lord their God is with them, the shout of a King is among st them.*

The new temple which the spirit of God describeth so exactly in its various dimensions, and curious perfections, such as should never have parallel, hath all its glorious priviledges from Gods gracious presence; *The name of that City from that day shall be, the Lord is there.* Ezek. *ult.* and *ult.*

It is observable, *Exod.* 33. 1, 2, 3, 4. that God seemeth to make *Israel* a very gracious offer. *And the Lord said unto* Moses, *Depart and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up, out of the land of Egypt, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. And I will send an Angel before thee, and I will drive out the* Canaanite, *and the* Amorite, *and the* Hitite, *and the* Perizi[illegible] *I will not go up in the midst of thee, for thou art a stiff-necked people, lest I consume thee in the way*; yet mark how the people take this bountiful tender, *And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned, and no man did put on his ornaments*, vers. 4. What *evil tidings* were here, 1. To have an Angel their guide and guardian; *I will send an Angel before thee*, surely that nurse would have been very tender of his Lords *Son*, his *first born*. 2. To have all their *enemies conquered*, *and I will drive out the* Canaanite; might not *Israel* march along without *fear*, when God had engaged that

all their *foes* should be thrown at their *feet*? 3. To be conducted to the goodliest country under the cope of Heaven. *To a land flowing with milk and hony*; to a place that was the paradice of the earth, and the fittest to be the type of Heaven; would not thousands have valued such a promise at an high price? What was there in all this, which called for mourning, that the *Israelites* take it so heavily, and lay it so much to heart? Truly this, the want of Gods presence, which could not be made up by all these priviledges, therefore *Moses* prays; *If thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence; Lord, it's better to be in an howling, barren wilderness with thy presence, then in* Canaan *without thee. Tis not a glorious Angels being our Captain which can give us true comfort; tis not the casting down our enemies, that can lift us up in glory; tis not the pleasant land flowing with milk and honey that can please us, without thy presence; if him leave us, all our* Isaacks (*do they promise us never so much joy or laughter*) *are* Benonis, *Sons of our sorrows, and* Ichabods, *the glory, the honour, the happiness is departed from* Israel, *if thy presence go not with us, carry us not hence.* But here is the priviledge of Saints, they have Gods presence. *My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest.*

Thirdly, Here *is comfort for Christians, they are commended to the living Gods care*; The Apostle had little to give his sorrowful friends, but he would *speak for them to that King*, who was able, and willing to give them all things. And indeed this was his greatest charity. By bodily almes he had opened his own purse, but by commending them to God he opened heavens Treasury; *Pauls*

prayers

prayers were more worth to them then the Empire of the whole world. The Apostle was a right courtier, he observed his Princes will, and drew up his petitions according to his pleasure, and therefore knew they should be prevalent. *Joab* did not doubt of success, when he set the woman of *Tekoah* a work, for that which *David* desired more then himself.

Beloved friends, I esteem it my duty and priviledge that I may write after the Apostles pious copy, ye are the people to which I was first called to be a Pastor, though opportunity hath sometimes been offered for greater preferment, yet I still waved all thoughts of leaving my first love and removal to any other Parish. I have been amongst you these eleven years, and cannot wholly complain that I *have spent my strength in vain, and laboured in vain*, some have acknowledged that they are the seals of my Ministry; Others, that God hath made me instrumental for their increase in grace. Gods power hath appeared in my weakness, and his mercy been manifest in my unworthiness, yet alas how many of you have had the dark side of this glorious pillar of the Gospel all this while towards you, which is matter of sad lamentation. O how speechless will they be at the day of Christ, who after so many years publique and private preaching of the word to them shall be found in a Christless, graceless estate; surely none sink so deep into Hell, as they who are pressed down thither under the weight of the Gospel.

I must notwithstanding this ground of unspeakable grief, admire that free grace which hath made me helpful to any one souls good. Besides, that I enjoyed

enjoyed more of God in his Ordinances amongst you then ever I have enjoyed all my life, I cannot but acknowledge that many of you have had much hearty kindness and respect for me, not onely above my desert, but much above what any parish that I have known or heard of in the County, have had for their Minister; I may say as *Paul* did, *my joy was the joy of you all (that feared God)* but now the providence of God is parting us, I know not better how to speak my love and faithfulness to you then by imitating this holy pattern in the Text, and *commending you to God and the word of his grace*; Indeed, *all* is in this one God; if he charge himself with you, none can *hurt* you, if he be yours, every thing will help you. When *Alexander* asked *Porus* (his Prisoner) how he would be used. *Porus* answered βασιλικῶς, *Like a King*; *Alexander* asked the same question again, he gave the same answer still; *do you desire no more* said *Alexander*? *No*, saith he, *All is in that one word (Plut.)* If it were demanded of you, to whom ye would be commended, I hope ye would answer, *to God*; for ye cannot but know that all good is in one God. The *Covenant of grace* is a rich mercy, to which all the Crowns and Empires in the World are but *Nits* and *nothings*, but this is the *Sun* which makes that Heaven so glorious, this is the sum and substance of it; *I will be your God, and ye shall be my people.* The design of the Son of God in his birth and death was certainly high and honourable; It was a noble end that was in the eye of such an agent, but it was no more then to beg and buye of God,

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to take care of man whom for his rebellion he had caſt off. *He ſuffered the juſt, for the unjuſt, to bring us to God.* 1 Pet. 3. 18. Living *David*, when his ſoul was amongſt Lyons, and ready to be torn in peices every hour, commits it into Gods hands; *Into thy hands Lord, I commit my ſpirit*, Pſa. 31. 4. The dying Redeemer, who knew the worth of that ineſtimable jewel, his own ſoul by the price which he paid for the ſouls of others, deſired no other Cabinet to have it laid up in, *Father into thy hands I commend my ſpirit.* To commend you to God is all that I can do for you, and it is indeed all that ye can deſire of me. Were you my neareſt Relations, and the object of never ſo dear affections, though ye were as near and dear to me as my own ſoul; If I had the ſtrongeſt ingagement to you imaginable, and the greateſt obligations poſſible, I could do no more, I need do no more then to commend you to God. Therefore give me leave now I am taking my leave of you to commend you to God. *And now Brethren I commend you to God.*

Firſt, I commend you to his *ſpecial favour* and *affection.* The good will of God is ſuch a lump of Sugar, as will ſweeten the bittereſt cup, it hath a vertue in it which will turn the ſmalleſt liquor into cordial water; The little Bird in her ſmall down Neſt ſings pleaſantly, when the great Birds in their large thorny Neſts, have but harſh voices. The Saint in the ſoft bed of Gods ſpecial love ſleepeth comfortably, when the wicked in their high places, great preferments, for want of this are in *little eaſe*, His *general love* is like the ordinary beams

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of the Sun, which convey light and heat, for the refreshment of all the World. So *the Lord is good to all, his mercy is over all his works*; but his special love is like the beams of the Sun united in a glass, which passing by others, fires the object onely. Gods love to his new creatures in Christ is burning love; he hath choice good, and good will too, for his chosen ones. *Let me see the good of his chosen. Look upon me, and be merciful to me, as thou art to them that fear thy name.* Its said of *Socrates*, *He prized the Kings countenance above his coyn.*

A kiss from God is of greater value then all the Kingdoms on earth. The Christian can travel merrily though his *way be dirty under foot*, if the heavens do but favour him, and it be *clean over head.* *If in the light of a Kings countenance there be life, and his favour be* (quickening and refreshing) *as a cloud of the latter rain*; what is there not in the light of Gods countenance! If an Heathen could say, *Contemnam minutos istos Deos modo Jovem propitium habeam. I care not for those petic-gods and demy-gods, so I can have but Jupiters good will*: Surely a Saint may say, *I care not for mens frowns, or Devils fury, so I may obtain but the blessed Gods favour.* Prov. 16. 15.

This special favour of God is a pearl of such price that it was bought with the blood of Christ, and none can beg a greater for themselves or others. This was *Davids* prayer for himself, *Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me*, Psa. 4. As the single Saint, so the Church, *Cause thy face to shine upon thy servants, and we shall be saved*, Psa. 80. Beleivers who love their neighbors as themselves can desire nothing better or greater.

Joseph loved Benjamin entirely (*his bowels yearned upon his brother*, Gen. 43. 29, 30.) But how doth he shew it? what doth he request for him? *God be gracious to thee my son.* Daniel, who fasted prayed, and was sorely affected with the Churches affliction, when he poured out his very heart to God for them, and would sum up all his prayers into one petition, this is it, *The Lord make his face to shine upon his sanctuary that is desolate for the Lords sake*, Dan. 9. 17. The prayer of the High Priest for the people was to this purpose, *The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you*, Numb. 6. 24. Affectionate Pauls lips spake the same language on the behalf of his Corinthians, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all*, 2 Cor. 13. ult.

Psal. 30. Psal. 63

To this God in whose favour *is life*, nay, *whose loving kindness is better then life*, I commend you, and my prayer shall be, *God be merciful to you, and bless you, and cause his face to shine upon you*, Psal. 67. 1.

Secondly, I commend you to his *special care and protection*: Angels are the *Churches Guardians*; *He shall give his Angels charge over thee*: but God himself is *Captain* of the *Saints Life guard*. He is *Lord of Hosts*.

It was an honour to *David*, and granted to him by *Achish* as a special favour *to be keeper of his head for ever*; but its an infinite condescention in the glorious God, yet this Office he is pleased to take upon him, *To be Keeper of his Saints heads*, or their *Head keeper for ever*. Nay he is known by *this name*, *He that keepeth Israel*. And if you would know how

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he *keepeth them*, truly so *diligently* that he saith, *I keep it night and day* (they are every moment within the view of his favourable eye, and under the guard of his Almighty arm) *Isa.* 27. 4. and so tenderly, that he is said to keep them *as the apple of his eye*, *Zach.* 2. 8. which is the tenderest peice (the Chrystaline humour, say Naturalists) of the tenderest part of mans body; of which Nature is so tender that she strongly guards it with tunicles. A great blow is better born on the back, then a small touch on the eye. *Oculus & fama non patiuntur iocos.*

Gods providence extendeth to all his creatures, its like the Sun, of universal influence, but in a special manner its operative for the safety of his Saints. *He is the Saviour of all men* (that is in respect of preservation, or temporary salvation) *but especially of them that beleeve*, 1 *Tim.* 4. Godly men are compared to *wheat*, wicked men to *chaff*: Good Husbands will not spoil their *chaff*, but they are specially careful of their good *corn*. When a fire breaketh out, God may leave sinners, as *lumber* to be consumed, but he will be sure that his Saints, which are his *jewels*, shall be saved. The Church is *Gods house*, and therefore that shall be well guarded, whatsoever be neglected: *The eyes of the Lord run too and fro through the whole earth, to shew himself strong on the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him*, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9.

Deus sic curat universos quasi singulos, sic singulos quasi solos. Aug.

The words contain, 1. The *universality* of Gods Providence; his eyes walk the rounds, as Satans feet *go round fro through the whole earth* to *devoure*, so Gods *eyes run to and fro through the whole earth* to *defend*.

Diana's Temple was burnt down when he was busie at *Alexanders* birth, and could not be at two places together; but God is present every where, at the same time, and therefore his *Church* which is his *Temple* can never suffer through his absence. Though Heaven be Gods *Palace*, yet it is not his *Prison*. *His eyes run to and fro through the whole earth.*

2. The *efficacy* of his Providence, *to shew himself strong*; God fights with his *eyes* as well as his *hands*, he doth not only *see* the peoples *dangers*, but *save* them from it. When the *Philosopher* in a starry night was in danger of *shipwrack*, he cried out, *Surely I shall not perish, there are so many eyes of providence over me.* King *Philip* said, he *could sleep safely because his friend* Antipater *watched for him*. God watcheth and wardeth for his people always.

If God forsake a people every enemy and evil will quickly finde them. *They are bread for us, for their defence is departed from them, Numb.* 14. 9. The *out-lying Deer* are shot while they within the pale are safe. The *Romans* in their wars used to call out their *Tutelar gods* of those *Cities* they besieged, as judging them invincible while they remained there, but easily won if they departed. When God left the *Israelites*, though but for a little while, the *Holy Ghost* said *they were naked*, *Ex.* 32. 25. how *naked?* not for want of rayment or weapons of war, but for want of Gods presence and protection, saith *Junius*.

Non veste sed gratia & praesidio Dei. Jun. in loc.

Whilst God continueth with you, ye are safe; if trials and troubles come, run under the shelter of this shield, if he doth not prevent the *evil of affliction*, he will protect you from the *evil in affliction*. When the City of *Sechem* was taken, the inhabitants fled to the

the Tower. God is a strong Tower, *Pro.* 10. that no Cannon can pierce, and he is an *high Tower* which no Ladder can scale, no Arrow can reach. *Psa.* 18.

As it was said of the Tribunal of *Cassius*, that it was *piorum rupes & reorum scopulus*, *a rock of refuge to the good, a rock of revenge to the bad.* So it may be said of God; He is a refuge for the oppressed Saint, a present help in time of trouble, though he wound the heads of sinners. *Valer. Maxim.*

Now to this God whose power is an all-sufficient shelter, and whose special providence is sure protection, at whose beck and bidding are all creatures in heaven and earth, who hath infinite wisdom to direct you, and infinite strength to support you, I commend you, and my prayer shall be, *The Lord preserve you from all evil, the Lord preserve your soul, the Lord preserve you in your goings out, and in your comings in, from this time forth and for ever.* Psal. 121. 7, 8.

Thirdly, In a word I commend you to his *universal benediction*, to his blessings in all your undertakings and concernments, as to his grace to affect you, in the midst of the Worlds hatred, and to his power to protect you in the middest of all hardships, so to his presence to prosper you in all the works of your hands. The fruitfulness of the earth depends wholly upon the influence of Heaven; If the Sun with-hold its heat, and the *clouds* their moysture, all things decay and wither. The success of all your actions depend on Gods benediction; If he deny his concurrence, nothing prospers. *Except the Lord build the house, they labour but in vain that build it*, Psa. 127. 1. Its lost labour to undertake the keep-

keeping up that houſe which God will have pulled down. Tis to no purpoſe to Plow that field which God will have lye Fallow. Neither men can help you in civil things, nor the means of grace in ſpirituals, unleſs God afford his aſſiſtance. Some Philoſophers tell us, that *God is the ſoul of the World*, as the ſoul is in every part of the body, ſo God in every part of the World. Sure I am as the body moveth not, nor any part of it, but as its animated and acted by the ſoul, ſo neither can the World, or any thing in it, but as its enlivened and acted by God. He is the *primum mobile*, which ſets all the other Orbs in motion.

Its ſaid of *David*, that he *proſpered whither ſoever* Saul *ſent him*, 1 Cron. 11. 9. but what was the ſpring of the watch, which cauſed all the wheels to move ſo regularly? *For God was with him*; It is his gracious preſence alone, which gives ſucceſs to every enterprize.

His bleſſing can turn not onely Water into Wine, temporal mercies into ſpiritual benefits, but even poiſon into wholſom food, every *ſtone* thrown at you by your enemies into a *precious ſtone*; he can cauſe the wrath of men (as the hunter uſeth the rage of the Dogs for his own ends) to work, not onely for his praiſe, but alſo for your profit; as a wiſe Governour meeting with oppoſite factions in a ſtate, while each ſtudieth and ſtriveth to undermine the other, ſerveth his own ends, and ſecureth his own intereſt by both. The wiſe and powerful God while wicked men plots *againſt* his people, makes them to conſpire for his people. The worlds actings are againſt the Saints

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intentionally, in regard of the malice of their hearts, but they are for the Saints *eventually* in regard of Gods over-ruling hand. That Knife which wicked men endeavour to thrust into some vital part of the beleiver to kill him, doth but light upon some impostume, and thereby tend to his cure. The scorching Sun of persecution, doth but ripen him for a glorious harvest.

Now to this God who can blow upon all his enemies plots, and they perish; who can breath with his spirit upon his peoples actions, and they prosper; who can cause all his providences to tend to your spiritual profit, and eternal peace, I commend you, and my prayer shall be, *The Lord hear you in the day of trouble, and the name of the God of* Jacob *defend you send you help from his sanctuary, and strengthen you out of Zion, grant you according to your hearts gracious desires*, and fulfil all your counsels. Psa. 20. 2,3,4.

For your further comfort know, that this God to whom ye are commended is an *able* friend, a *loving* friend, and a *faithful* friend, and therefore it is the greatest good I can do for you.

First, *God is the most able Friend.* To have a friend at *Court*, is a great *courtesie*; because such a one can command much; but what is it then to have God for your friend, who can command all things, God is able to do more for you then you *can ask or think*, He is thirty times called *Almighty* in *Job*; He can do above all expressions, beyond all apprehensions. What cannot he do for you, who made the whole World of nothing, and hangs the massy earth upon nothing.

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He is able to *defend* you from whatsoever is *hurtful*. There is a Dialogue between an Heathen and a Jew after the Jews return from Captivity (all Nations round about them being enemies to them) The Heathen asked the Jew *how he and his country men could hope for any safety, because* (saith he) *every one of you is a silly sheep compassed about with fifty Wolves*; *I but* saith the Jew, *we are kept by such a Shepheard as can kill all those Wolves when he pleaseth.* God can with a breath, a puff, blast all the plots of his enemies, and cause their persons to perish; how happy are they then who have him for their strong hold? The *Egyptians* had an Idol called *Baalzephon Lord of the watch Tower*, whose Office was to fright such fugitive Jews as fled from their Masters; but it seems he was a sleep, when the *Israelites* marcht out of *Egypt* in a full body. God is pleased to call himself the *watchmen* of his people, but he is such a watchman as neither *slumbereth* (or taketh those short sleeps by day) nor *sleepeth* (or hath any long sleep by night) his eyes never close, all his thoughts are waking thoughts for the good of his people.

If enemies come before them, He is the *Lord of Hosts*; If behind them he is their *rere-ward*. It was said of the *Palladium* in *Troy*, that whilst that Image remained there, the City was impregnable, and that till the *Greeks* found out a stratagem to steal that Idol away they could not take it. Whatever fancy there was in that, this is a truth, that God is the defence of a people, and while he is present they are safe.

Are your *dangers bodily*, he can bear off those blows.

blows. No evil can arrest you without leave from this King. Al his Servants are *Courtiers*, and thereby *priviledged* persons. He can make an *hedge* about your selves, your houses, and all that ye have (as about *Job* 1. and 10.) and then neither men nor Devils can make a *gap* for any to enter and injure you. *Hesiod* speaks of thirty thousand Demy-Gods that were φύλακες ἀνθρώπων, *Keepers of men*; The true God keepeth his in a *Pavilion*, as a Prince his Favourite, from the mischeif of others envy and malice, *Psa.* 31. 20.

If afflictions be near, he will not be far off. He ventures his *fortune* in the same *bottom* with his people. *When thou passest through the fire, I will be with thee, and through the waters it shall not come nigh thee*, Isa. 43. 2. If the Church be a burning bush, it will not be consumed, because God is in it. As it is safe in the *fire*, so also in the *Water*; though it be a Vessel (as that wherein the Disciples were) sailing in a rough Sea, tost up and down with tempestuous winds, and boystrous Waves, nay filled almost with waters, and ready to sink, yet there is no fear, because *Christ is in it*, for though he seem to sleep, waiting onely for a fit opportunity to manifest and magnifie his power, yet when the storm comes, he will be sure to awake, and with his word of command to cause a calm; The Church as *Hierom* saith of *Arcturus*, *semper versatur, nunquam mergitur*, is much *tossed*, but never *drowned*, *God is in the midst of her, she shall never be moved, he shall defend her, and that right early.*

God is said to *ride on the Heavens for his peoples help*, Deu. 33. 26, 27. That is either, he will come *speedily* (as the *heavens* move swiftly) for his peoples deliverance,

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he will not delay till it be too late, but prevent them with his love. Or, he hath power and will command all his creatures to be serviceable to his Churches safety, *he rideth on the Heavens for thy help.* As a man that rides on an horse, can command it, or turn it, and wind it with a curb and bit, which way he pleaseth; so can the Omnipotent God, command the Heavens and all their Host, for his peoples help. Though enemies come with open mouth to swallow the Church up quickly, yet she will be gravel in their teeth, and should they ever take her down, as the Whale did *Jonah*, yet God will force them to vomit her up again, and make them find by woful experience, that she is too hard a morsel for the strongest persecutors stomachs to digest.

Are your *fears spiritual*, God is able to be your defence; Its probable your suspicions are great, that you shall fall off or fall away. The World is a slippery place, but he *is able to keep you from falling*, Jude v. 24. We are apt to fall on the *right hand* by its *allurements*. Its *rich Wine* is apt to intoxicate our brains, and make us stumble. We are apt to fall on the *left hand* by its *affrightments*, as the *silver* of its comforts fouls our fingers, so the *fire* of its crosse is apt to black and defile us. Those that travail in rugged ways, and on stony lanes often fall, but God is able to *keep you from falling*. If God keep his hold of you there is no fear, but ye will keep your feet and your ground too. *We are kept by his power, through faith unto salvation.* His power and his love are the Eagles Wings upon which the Saints are carried out of *Egypt*, through the Wilderness, and safely conveyed to *Canaan*.

He

He can keep you from falling two ways:

1. He can *deny temptations to you*, if he see they will be too hard for you. All have not the same *faith*, therefore all are not tryed in the same *fire*. He may give a *strong purge* or *vomit* to a *strong man*, but will not to a *babe* in grace. He knoweth whether the Armour will *bow*, and if it will, he can prevent the *bullet*. He is acquainted with the hardiest Souldiers in his Army, and them he will call to the hardest service, *Rev.* 3. 10. When the weather is very bad, he will not venture his sickly child abroad.

2. He can *enable you to foyl the tempter*. Little *David* in his strength can conquer great *Goliah*; he kept *Josephs* soul from being so much as singed (miraculously as the three Childrens bodies) by that great fire which his Mistris made to have burnt him. Though the Saint, like *Daniel*, be cast for his conscience into a Den, there to fight with, and in danger to be devoured by Lyon-like lusts, he can bring him out as safe and as whole as he was cast in. The Gold-smith would not venture his gold in the fire, if he knew it would be consumed by it. Man is no match for Devils, but God overmatcheth them.

Preservation from sin these two ways *Austin* acknowledgeth with much affection. *Lord* saith he, *when I had an heart to sin, thou didst keep off the temptation, and when I had a temptation to sin, thou didst keep off my heart.* If your hearts be as dry as *tinder*, he can hinder Satan from striking

striking fire; if he suffer the tempter to strike fire, he can make the *tinder wet* and hinder it from taking. As he is able to *defend* you from what is *hurtful* so to *relieve* you with what is *needful*. As the *fire* both purifieth the air, and warmeth them that sit about it: he knoweth that ye are indigent, and have nothing of your own to live upon, but he can send you in such daily supplies as may afford you an honourable subsistence. I have read of one that feasted the vast Army of *Xerxes*: Gods estate is infinite, and therefore will bear a liberal provision for all his Children. I know you desire proficiency of grace, and perfection in glory above all the World. He can *build you up* in grace, he can cause all grace to abound. If this Sun drew nigh to you the *fruits* of the Spirit will ripen apace. This *well of Salvation* can fill every vessel of your hearts, be they never so wide, he can make the *babe* of grace to grow till he become a *young man*, a *strong* man, and a *Father*. If the *Nurse* be taken from the Child, and the *breasts* be denyed it, of which it used to suck with so much delight, he can make it thrive as well with the spoon; in the want of pure publique ordinances, he can be a *little sanctuary* to his Saints. He often sendeth them a warm bit up to their Chambers, when they cannot come down and feed with the rest of the family. He can *give you an inheritance* that fades not away, he can conduct you through all your *hardships* and crown you at last with *heaven*, where ye shall be kept, both from sin and suffering, and freed not only from *foyls*, but also from *fighting*; where the love of God shall never be *questioned*, nor his providence *quarrelled*, where ye shall never offend others with yout *purity*, nor have cause to defend your selves from their *injuries*, *where all tears shall be wiped from*

Si Esuris, panis tibi est; si sitis, aqua tibi est; si in tenebris lumen est, &c. Aug. Tract. in Johan.

your eyes, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Where persecutors cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. Where your names shall be fully vindicated, your infirmities be wholly banished, your graces be perfected, and your souls infinitely blessed, being locked up in the bosom of Christ, and lodged in the imbraces of God for ever and ever.

2. He is the most *Loving Friend*: Some have *power* to do their neighbours a courtesie, but tell us they owe them not so much *good will*. God as he hath *power* enough to enable him, so he hath *love* enough to move him to do his people good. *Jonathan* ventured far for *David's* safety, and the reason was, *for he loved him as his own soul.* They who have Gods heart, are sure of his helping hand. He chuseth his love and then loves his choyce; he had precious thoughts of them, before they had any thoughts of themselves.

God loves his people as they are his *Eternal choice*; the Mother loves the childe whom she carried nine moneths in her womb; O how then doth God love his people whom he carried in the *womb* of his *purpose* from all eternity! He loves them as they are his *own picture*, as they are like him in grace and holiness. Men have loved others the more for resembling them in sin; so did *Heliogabalus* his children: God loves his children the more for resembling him in *sanctity*. Grace is lovely; *God* cannot but love his *Saints*, because he loves *himself*; he loves them as they are his *Sons purchase*. They which were so dearly bought, are not easily loathed. *Jacob* was exceeding tender of *Benjamin*, though he could, as occasion required, expose the ten Patriarchs to *all*

weathers,

weather; yet by his good will the wind must not blow upon *Benjamin*: if *Benjamin* miscarry, he dieth with him. And what is the reason of this extraordinary affection? possibly this, *Benjamin* was the childe of his beloved *Rachel*, *Benjamin* was dearly bought, he cost the life of his dear wife. So *God* loves his *Saints* with a singular love, because they are the children of his dear Son, *the travel of his soul*. His beloved Son had many a sharp throw, and many a bitter pang before he could bring them forth, nay they cost him his very life.

He loves them *above all the world* besides. All others are *drosse*, they are his *gold*. This whole World was set up as a tent for them to lodge in, for the time of their pilgrimage, and when they shall be removed to their fathers house, this tent will presently be taken down. If all the *wheat* were but gathered into the heavenly *Garner*, the *chaff* would not be an hour out of the *unquenchable fire*. He loves them as his *own Son*, *Joh.* 17.26,27. Who can tell the love God bears to his Son? the same love he bears to his Saints. His name is *love*, his nature is *love*, his Son is the *token* of his *love*, his Spirit is the *earnest* of his *love*, the *Gospel* his *love-letter*.

Hence it is that they are so happy who are committed to *Gods* keeping, because he is so *loving a Guardian*.

All the while that his people suffer he doth sympathize, and he will support them. As a tender father he proportions the burden to the strength of his childrens back: He doth like a *Lutanist* (to use *Chrysostoms* similitude) who will not let the strings

of

of his Instrument be too slack, lest they mar the musick, nor suffer them to be too hard screwed up, lest they break. He who taught the Husbandman to use several instruments for the threshing of several sorts of grain, and not to turn the cart wheel about upon the Cummin (*Isa.* 28.25.) will certainly himself not suffer his people to be afflicted *above what they are able*, 2 *Cor.* 1.8.

His love will set all his other Attributes at work for his peoples good; His Wisdom will contrive, his Power will act, and his Faithfulnes will perform (whatsoever he promiseth) all for the comfort of his Church, and all because he loveth them. What would not *David* have done for *Absolom*, whom he affecteth so dearly? when *Absolom* rebelled against him and sought his life, his heart relented towards *Absolom* out of love? What a charge doth he give his Captains concerning him, *Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absolom*? What will not God do for his chosen whom he loveth? when they wander and run from him, he followeth after and wooeth them; for *the iniquity of his covetousnes I was wroth and smote him, I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his own heart.* Mark, Here is a childe in a great crime, his Father corrects him, and instead of kissing the rod he kicks at the hand that holds it; *He went on frowardly in the way of his own heart.* Well what is the fruit of this frowardnes? you might expect greater severity upon such contumacy; surely if few stripes will do no good, many must be laid on; or if those will not do, the ax might be used: But lo what love doth! *I have seen his ways, and will heal him:*

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I will lead him also and restore comforts unto him and to his mourners, Isa. 57. 17, 18, 19. Well, though he be undutiful yet he is my child; I will throw away my rods and draw him with the cords of love; though he freez under the nipping frosts, yet he will thaw under my warm beams.

13. He is the most *faithful friend*. He is *constant* in his love: Some are able, and loving also for a time, but their love, like a candle (though it burn a little in a close room, and calm weather) is easily blown out by a stormy wind. If a Christian be called to the cross he is (like the Deer that is shot by the herd) pulled out of their company; but God is a *lasting*, yea an *everlasting friend*; his love like the Sun can never be buried, much less *extinguished* by the greatest tempest, but is always going forth in its full strength. *A brother is born for adversity*, *a friend loveth at all times*, Prov. 17. 17. Such a friend is God, who (when few *men will*) never fails to appear for his suffering servants, 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17. *Basil* encouraged very far for a persecuted friend, and being blamed for it, answered, *Ego aliter amare non didici, I have learned not to love otherwise*. The Ancients pictured friendship in the shape of a fair young man, *bare headed*, with his *breast open*, meanly apparelled, with this inscription on his cloaths; *To live and to dye with you*, and this on his forehead, *Summer and Winter*, and with this on his heart, *Hope longer, fear not*. God is such a friend as will never disown or deny his people. In the furnace the three children shall have his presence where-ever he is absent. When men are mutable, and appear as *Torrents*

an faith of the Peacock, *all in changeable colours*; use their friends as we do *Sun-dials*, look no longer on them, not regard them, then the Sun shineth on them. *God is a faithful creator*, 1. *Pet.* 4. 19. will be sure to mind the house that he hath built, and that most of all when its out of repair and ready to fall. *Bucholcerus* upon his friends going to Court to teach the Prince Electors children, told him, *I will give you one piece of counsel which may do you good whilst you live*; His friend hearkned to him: *I commend* (saith he) *to you the faith of Devils*; *Take heed whom you trust.*

Indeed there are many men like *ponds*, clear at the top and mud at the bottom; fair in their *tongues* but foul in their *hearts*. The greatest mens words are often like dead mens shoes, he may go barefoot that trusteth to them. *But O what a faithful friend is God, who never faileth his! he is such a Physician as will be sure to visit his Patients often when sick, although he may pass by their doors when they be well.*

He is *faithful to his promise*; his *Word is the truth*, *Col.* 1. 5. His Church is the *Pillar of truth* (not to bear it up, but to hold it out) 1 *Tim.* 3. his Sacraments *the seals of truth*; he himself is *the Lord God of truth*, *Psal.* 34. 5. Who feares to be deceived when truth promiseth. He keeps his promise to a word; *Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls that there hath not one good thing failed of all that the Lord promiseth*, *Josh.* 23. 14. The birth of the promise will answer their conception, and they bring forth in full feature and glory.

Quis fallit eum cui promittit veritas. Aug. confes. lib. 11. *cap.* 1.

God is usually *better*, but never in the least *worse*

In sacra scriptura non solum bonitas est quod præcipitur, & felicitas quod promittitur: sed etiam veritas quod dicitur Hugo.

then his word. His *promise* is equivalent to possession. He keeps touch with his people in the *time* of performance to a *day*. *The self same day Israel marched out of Egypt*, Ex. 12. 41. The four hundred and thirty years were that very day expired, nay to a night; *Dan.* 5. 30. In that night was *Belshazer* the King of the *Chaldeans slain*. When the big-bellied promise had gone its full time (the seventy years being then expired) it could not stay till morning for its *delivery*, but fell in labour that very night, and was safe delivered.

The promises are the flowers of which the cordial Julips are made, which refresh you in fainting hours; but as Gods love is the root upon which they grow, so his faithfulness is the hand that must bring them to you. Tis your happiness, that your riches lye in such good hands as Gods, and that the publique faith of Heaven is ingaged for the payment of all your bonds; For be confident he who will not suffer a *Lyer* to enter *Heaven*, will much less suffer a *lye* to enter his own *heart*; *faithful is he that hath promised, and also will doit*, 1 Thes. 5. 24.

Thus my dearly Beloved I commend you to the favour and affection, power and protection, care and benediction of this God, who is so able, so loving, and so faithful a friend.

But as I desire, and shall endeavour by faith and prayer to commend you to God, so I cannot but hope, and I beg it of all amongst you, that have any interest at the throne of grace, that ye would commend me to God, *I beseech you for the Lord Jesus*

Jesus Christs sake, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, Rom. 15. 30.

Before I conclude, as I have commended you to God, so let me commend you to, and commend to you, *the Word of his grace*. *Julius Cæsar* being forced to swim for his life, *held his Commentary in one hand above water, and swam to land with the other*. Without question you have more cause to value the word of Gods grace. The law breatheth forth a cold blast, a northwind of threatnings, but the Gospel sendeth forth a warm gale, a southwind of promises; grace of all Gods attributes must not be neglected; love can least endure to be slighted: O let me beseech you for the Lords sake, for your soulsake, to value the Gospel. Alas what are ye without it, but condemned Malefactors, every moment liable to be called forth and hung up, as monuments of Gods fury in Hell! If ever poor creature in fear every moment of being fetcht out of the Prison and carried to the Gallows did esteem a pardon, sure I am ye have cause to prize the Gospel. O sirs, how had all of us at this day been shut up under the Laws curse, in the Dungeon of endless wrath and misery, had not the Gospel opened the prison doors, knockt off our shackles, and set our souls at liberty!

I commend the word of his grace to you under a fourfold consideration.

First, *To purifie your affections*. I know ye want grace, now the word of grace can beget grace, and increase grace. It's the usual pipe through which grace may be conveyed into the vessels of your

hearts. The Laws of men may reform your actions, but tis the Gospel of God which can renew your affections. Some Poets speak of Musicians that by the force of their musick can make stones leap into Walls, and tame beasts, be they never so savage: The word of Gods grace will do much more, twill turn stones into Children of *Abraham*, twill change an heart of stone, into an heart of flesh, twill tame *Lyons*, and turn them into *Lambs*, Isa. 11. 4, 5, 6. It hath made the very hearts of them to bleed, whose hands were imbrued in the blood of the Redeemer.

Let your endeavour be, that this word of grace may come with power to your souls, that you may not onely *hear* it, but *savour* it, and not onely *read* it, but *relish* it. O my friends, the lack of this is the undoing of thousands. What is the reason that some who seemed very fair for Heaven, fall away foully, and (as some Marriners boast) can sail with all winds, to what Haven soever they blow? truely this; the Gospel though sometimes it conquered their *outworks*, never surprised the *royal Fort* of their hearts; though it darted in some light, yet it was never received *in the love of it*. O therefore let me beseech you that ye receive *not the grace of God in vain*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. Ah how sad will it be for you if your hearts be like *rocks*, on which the dews of grace falling, make no impression, as the Apricock Tree leaneth on the wall, but is rooted in the earth, so many seem to lean on Christ, but are rooted in their lusts; the word of grace abused is *the condemnation*. If grace be your enemy, ye have no friend in Heaven or Earth. The fruits of no Trees ripen so fast, the sins of no

men grow so great, as of them that stand constantly in the sunshine of the Gospel. If the Gospel be not a *morning star* to you, a forerunner of an eternal day, by ushering in the *Sun of righteousness* upon you; it will be an *evening star* to you, bringing on you an everlasting night of death and darkness. As the Ocean landeth some vessels safely at their happy ports, when it sinketh others; so the word of Gods grace will either be a *savour of life unto life, or a savour of death unto death.*

2. To be *the rule of your conversations.* Your whole *race* must be *regular*, and there is no such rule to walk or work by, as the *word of his grace. As many as walk according to this rule*, Gal. 6. 16. that is according to the *Gospel.* It containeth not onely *promises* for your *consolation*, but also *precepts* for your *conversations*, therefore its called a *royal Law*, Jam. 2. 8. A *Law*, *because* it is to be the canon of our lives, the Law delivered on Mount *Sinai*, is by Christ adopted into the Family of the Gospel. A *royal Law*, *because* given us by *God*, the King of the World, who hath Soveraignty and Dominion over all, and therefore power to command what he pleaseth. The word of his grace is a *royal Law*, because the Kings highway, out of which road none may wander under the penalty of Rebellion. Indeed the Gospel is a *Law of liberty*, but not a *Law of licentiousness*, Jam. 1. 25. It freeth us from the curse, but not from the commands of the law. A true Christian is not ἄνομος *without law*, but ἔννομος, *under the law* to Christ, 1 *Cor.* 9. 21. Look therefore to this Royal law,

Expound

Expound it, and comment on it in your lives.

Let it be your *rule* for *faith*; The *Gospel* is the onely *Creed*, he that beleiveth this is a true beleiver. As the *Word*, Christ is the *personal* foundation, so the *Word* of Christ is the *Doctrinal* foundation, for every Christian to build on, *Ephes.* 2. 19, 20. *Then we beleive*, saith *Tertullian*, *when we first beleive that we ought to beleive nothing beyond the Scriptures.* Paul proves himself a true beleiver, because he beleived *all things written in the Law and Prophets*, Act. 24. 14.

Make it your *rule* for *worship*. To serve God according to your own inventions, or mens prescriptions, is Rebellion and disservice. As the Moth eats out the Garment, and the Rust the Iron, so doth an Apochryphal worship in time eat out an Evangelical worship, *Mat* 15. 7. All worship of God without warrant, is like private coyning mony, *high Treason* against the King of Heaven. God (though men durst not) charged *Jeroboam* with this crime, *He offered upon the Altar which he had made, in the moneth which he had devised of his own heart*, 1 King. 12. 33. He took liberty to worship, when, and where he pleased; not when, and where God pleased. Till man can be his own *maker*, he may not be his own *Law giver*; While his dependance is on God, God expecteth observance from him. The Gospel is not onely a *royal* law, but a *perfect* law, *James* 1. 25. It needs not additions, or traditions from men to supply its defects. Its horrid blasphemy to accuse Scripture of deficiency, Christ Jesus was faithful in all his house, which he had not been, if the Laws he left

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us were not sufficient for Gods service; Those that add to his word, tell us, though not *plainly*, yet *interpretatively*, that he was an unfaithful Prophet. Friends I beseech you keep close to this rule. It will be a good Antidote against the infections of the Papists; when the shops are full of adulterate ware, men that would not be cheated, will bring what they buy to the light, *To the law and to the testimony*, Isa. 8. 20.

In all things, *live by the Gospel*, *and look to the Gospel*, let that be a light to your feet, and a lanthorn to your paths; keep the word, and it will keep you in an hour of temptation from sinning, and in an hour of dissolution from sinking. The Lawyer in his doubts consults with his *Littleton* or *Cook*; The Physitian prescribes by *Gallen* or *Hipocrates*; the Phylosopher takes advice of his *Aristotle*; but the godly man must always take counsel of the Gospel, *Prov.* 4. 3. *ult. Ponder the paths of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established, turn not to the right hand, nor to the left, remove thy feet from evil.*

Darius would be advised by his *Zophyrus*, and *Cipio* would do nothing without his *Palybius*. Let the *Law* of God be your *Counsellor*, the man of your Counsel, as *David* made it; fear every thing which Gods law doth not allow.

The Hen doth not onely fear the Ravenous Fowls, but runneth away if she see so much as their *shadow*. Turn not in the least away from Gods law, but hate the appearance, and shun the occasion of evil. Many will labour to keep their credits, and to save their purses, do you labour to keep

keep your consciences, and to save your piety, and your souls.

Thirdly, To be your *Buckler against opposition.* The Gospel is a *Magazin*, out of which Christians may be furnished with spiritual weapons in their *holy war* against the kingdom of darkness. Other armour, as of parts and gifts, morality and examples is (as *Alexander* said of the *Persians*, when he saw them come into the field so richly cloathed to fight with the *Grecians*) rather a *prey* to the Enemy then a *defence* to the Souldiers that wears it. Tis the word which is a shield against *evil principles*, Mat. 22. 29. it may fitly be called (as *Austin* sometime was) *Hæreticorum malleus, the Hammer of Heriste.* He that is mighty in Scripture, is the man that can hit this unclean Bird in the eye, and wound it mortally with one blow, *Act.* 18. 28. Even Women, that are the weaker sex with this *Sword* in their hands (having learned from the Spirit how to use it) have encountred with great Doctors, disarmed them of all their Philosophical weapons, and shamefully foiled them. A Fryer being angry at *Luther* for spoiling their market, said, *That had it not been for* Luther, *they could have perswaded the* Germans *to have eaten*; lay aside Scripture, and seducers shall prevail with you to eat poison.

Liv. Lib. 9.

Its a shield against *evil practices*, Psa. 119. 9. *By what means may a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to the word.* It must be a strong curb which can rein in a young man (who is hot and heady) when he is gallop-

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ing with full carreir in the road of sin and Hell, but the Gospell can do it. When a spriteful Youngman which is tasting and taking his carnal pleasures, which his youth will help him to savour above others; let but the Gospel spread a table before him of his dainties, and let him but feed thereon, and his mouth will be ever after out of relish with all the course food, and homely fair of this World.

Doth *Satan assault you*, *Ephes.* 6. 17. use the Gospel for your defence. It is not the sign of *the Cross*, but *the Word of the Cross* which Satan feareth. The Gospel like *Mustardseed*, which *Pliny* saith, mixt with vinegar is soverain against the poison of Serpents.

As Fencers play some times, and fight with *low weapons*, meerly to teach their Schollars how to use them; So the blessed Saviour, though he could with his Deity have driven way the Devil, yet fighteth against him with the *Word*, to shew us the vertue of, and how we should handle that weapon, *Matth.* 4. 4, 7, 10. Rev. 12. 11.

Is the world to you a place of *thorns and bryars*, get your *feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace*, and ye may walk comfortably through it. The Irish some say tread so lightly on the ground, that they run over bogs in which others stick and sink to their ruine. Though many perish in the Worlds Sloughs and Quagmires, yet they that have the Gospel shoe on are sure to be safe. 2 Cor. 10. 4.

Would it *allure you with proſperity to prophaneſs*; This indeed is a moſt dangerous bait: *Adam* was conquered in *Paradice*, when *Job* was conqueror on the *Dunghil*. Whilſt the Oyſter is toſſed by the Crab ſhe ſo claſpeth her ſhell that ſhe is in little danger of being devoured; but when without fear ſhe layeth her ſelf open to the Sun, then comes her enemie and thruſting in a ſtone to keep her open, with his claws picks her out. But the Goſpel will yield you a *Piſgah ſight of Paleſtine*; and what a *poor nothing* is this whole World in his eyes who is able to look into the *other World?* He who beheld the *recompence of reward*, ſcorned the dignity of being Son to *Pharoahs* Daughter, and according to ſome of the Jewiſh Rabbies trampled the Crown ſhe put upon his head under his feet.

Would it *affright you with Adverſity* from piety: The Goſpell will ſhew you that the Croſs is the path to the Crown; and as long as the Traveller, to a glorious Kingdom, is in the right way (though it be dirty) he is contented. Chriſt went to *Jeruſalem* (*the Viſion of peace*) by *Bethany* (*the houſe of grief*) *Omnis Chriſtianus crucianus*, ſaith *Luther*, *Every Saint muſt be a ſufferer.*

I hope ye will be willing to go to Heaven in the ſame way which Chriſt and the noble Army of Saints have all marched in. Beſides the Goſpel will hold up your heads above theſe *Billows*, by diſcovering the gain you ſhall get by afflictions. Chriſtians, like ſome other creatures, ſee beſt in

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the *night of ſorrow* and *diſtreſs*. The Diamond of their graces ſparkle gloriouſly at the bottom of thoſe Waters. When the *Wind is down*, the *chaff remains with the Wheat*, but when it riſeth it *bloweth the chaff away*.

The Word of his Grace will aſſure you of Divine ſupplies ſutable to your ſufferings; That God, like an indulgent Mother, will be ſure to tend his ſick Children, though he leave others to the Servants. When Chriſt had cauſed *Jacob* to halt, then the place was turned into a *Peniel*. Beleive me there is no ſuch joy in the World as the people of God have under the Croſs, ſaith *Philpot*. *Iſrael* never ſaw ſo much of God as in the Wilderneſs, then *Manna* from Heaven, then the *Pillar* goeth before them, and the *Rock* followed after them.

Fourthly, To be your *Cordial in all afflictions*. The Rams-skin covered the Ark from the injury of wind and weather; which typified the defence the Church hath by the Goſpel from thoſe miſeries to which ſhe is liable on earth. *This is my comfort*, ſaith *David*, *in my afflictions thy word hath quickened me*. When the weight of his afflictions was ready to ſink him, the Goſpel, like blown Bladders preſerve him from ſinking.

Some I remember expound that place, *Thou O God didſt ſend a plentiful ſhowre, whereby thou didſt refreſh thine heritage when it was weary*, *Pſal.* 65.9. The Law was rained down with thoſe heavenly Oracles on mount *Sinai*; while the thunder *affrighted* the people, the Law *refreſhed* them. If

the *Law* did revive them in that terrible tempeſt, what will the *Goſpel* do? If his *precepts* are ſweeter then the honey and the honey comb, how ſweet are his *Promiſes*? If his *Statutes* are the Saints *ſongs*, ſurely the *word of his Grace* is his *triumph:*

Seneca going about to comfort his friend *Polibius* perſwades him to bear his affliction patiently, becauſe *he was Ceſars Favourite.* The word of grace affords you infinitely richer cordials, *exceeding rich and precious promiſes*, wherein ye are admitted to be the *friends of God*, the *members of Chriſt*, the *Temples of the Spirit*, and the *heirs of heaven.* The feather of the promiſe hath dropt in ſome comfort into a broken heart, when it hath been ready to die with deſpair, and could take thing down: *That ye through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

This life would be little better then Hell, ſaith *Bernard*, *were it not for the hope of Heaven*; but the hope of your future happineſs, which is diſcovered in the Goſpel, may like Cork to the line keep your hearts aloft all waters and afflictions.

Now ye have a ſtorm, but hereafter an everlaſting calm, now ye are toſt too and fro, and weather beaten, but faith by the *proſpective* glaſs of the Goſpel, diſcovers *land*, and this without queſtion may ſupport your ſpirits.

Therefore when trouble comes, take heed of fetching your comfort from any creature. Alas, they are all puddle water, tis the word of grace which is the *pure River* of water of life, clear as Chryſtal

Chrystal, the River whose *streams make glad the City of God.*

Thus I commend you to the word of his grace, in this four fold respect.

To conclude all, it is Reported of a friend of *Cyrus*, that being asked, *where his treasure was*, he answered, Ὅπου κῦρος φιλὸς, Where *Cyrus is my friend*; I hope if any ask you, *where your Treasure, your Riches, your Honour, your Happiness is*, ye will say Ὅπου θεὸς φιλὸς, *Where God is our friend.* Now to this God according to my power, I *have*, I *do*, and I shall *commend* you, to his *favour* and *singular affection*, to his power and special *protection*, and to his *care* and *universal benediction.*

I cannot commend you to one so faithful, though others fall off like leaves in *Autumn*, he will never leave you (that are his) nor forsake you, I know not to commend you to one so loving, he lived in love, he in our natures dyed for love. His love is like himself, boundless and bottomless, 'ts impossible to commend you to one so able; he can suppy all your needs, fill all your souls to the brim, grace is lovely in your eyes, who ever beheld it. Glory is infinitely amiable in your judgments who ever beleivedit. *He can build you up, and give you an inheritance, where all the heirs are Kings and Queens, and shall sit on thrones, and live and reign with Christ, for ever and ever*; there ye shall have *robes* of purity on your backs, *palms* of victory on your hands, *crowns* of glory on your heads, and *songs* of triumphs in your mouths, there ye may meet together to wor-

worſhip him without fear, and drinks freely of his ſweeteſt, deareſt favour; there your ſervices will be without the ſmalleſt ſin, and your ſouls without the leaſt ſorrow; If Paſtor and People meet there they ſhall never part more. Its ſome comfort now, that though diſtant in places, we can meet together at the throne of grace; but O what a comfort will it be to meet together in that palace of glory! But ſince we muſt *part here. Finally my brethren, farewel, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace, ſhall be with you. And now brethren I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance amongſt all them that are ſanctified.*

FINIS.